# THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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# EDITORIAL NOTES

## On Guard for Peace

BEHIND all the talk which one hears so often in Africa about "neutrality" and "non-commitment to power blocs" there often lies a certain line of thought. It is this : there are two great groups of countries, the "West" (i.e. the imperialist powers and their clients and hangers-on) and the "East" (i.e., the socialist countries). Now, it is argued, the danger of world war arises from the stubbornness and intransigence of both these "blocs", each of which is assumed to be equally bellicose and responsible for the cold war ; and the conclusion which is drawn is that we, the uncommitted, the holy, must say "a plague on both your houses," or at any rate try to act as mediators to talk the nuclear powers into a more reasonable frame of mind, and thus avert the dreadful menace of war. It is a plausible line, often well meant. The trouble is that it rests on a fundamental misconception and confusion.

True, war is a dreadful menace, to Africa no less than to any other part of the world. It requires vigorous action by peace-loving people all over the world if we are to be spared the calamity of a nuclear holocaust which each month of the latter part of 1961 seems to be bringing nearer to reality. But effective action rests not on good intentions but on clear thinking and understanding. No such clear thinking is possible if it does not recognise the basic fact of the present international situation : the root difference between the policy of the socialist camp and that of the imperialist camp. The socialist countries stand for peace. The imperialist countries live by war ; they have been continually at war for the past half-century, and the one thing that deters them from the ultimate horror of World War Three is their fear of losing it—that is, their fear of the strength of the Soviet Union and its fraternal allies of the socialist camp.

Not for one moment have the imperialist powers laid down their arms. Since the end of the second world war they have been constantly fighting all over the world ; all over Asia—in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Korea and other countries, where British, French, American and other colonialist troops fought wars of conquest against patriots seeking national emancipation ; all over Africa—in Kenya and the Congo, in Algeria and Angola, where the

N.A.T.O. powers are still fighting wars of conquest against African people today; and in Latin America where the leading imperialist power, the United States tried, successfully, to overthrow a democratic republic in Guatemala, and, unsuccessfully, to do the same in Cuba.

## PRETTIFYING IMPERIALISM

There is a school of thought which tries to cover up this reality, to prettify imperialism, by painting it as a generous benefactor, conferring the gift of independence upon grateful colonial peoples. For instance, the Cape Town fortnightly "Contact" edited by Mr. Patrick Duncan, a leading member of the Liberal Party, known for his obsessive hatred of Communism, writes (July 27, 1961):

> "All the European powers, except for Portugal, have given or are giving independence to all their colonial possessions in Africa and Asia. The West is thus the friend of colonial freedom."

No African patriot or freedom fighter will need to be told that this grotesque picture painted by Mr. Duncan is the very reverse of the truth. We remember the long, bitter and bloody struggles that had to be waged against the colonialists before they could be forced to retreat from their ill-gotten colonial "possessions." How does this picture of "Contact" fit in with the fact that scores of leaders of African and Asian countries—Nehru of India, Nkrumah of Ghana and now Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya—have emerged directly from imperialist dungeons to become recognised leaders of their countries? And we suppose that tomorrow, when Angola wins her struggle after bloody battles and countless deaths and sacrifices at the hands of the Portuguese fascists, Mr. Duncan will paint Salazar, too, as a benign emancipator and "friend of colonial freedom." It would seem, according to this strange reasoning that when you finally manage to kick someone out of your house, after he has entered it by force and has long been lording it there and robbing you of all you have, you are expected humbly to thank him—for getting out!

No imperialists ever got willingly out of their colonies. If we have seen a glorious tide of national liberation sweeping over Asia and Africa in our times, it is not because of any kindness and generosity of the West; it is because of the heroic struggles and sacrifices of millions of Asian and African patriots who stood up to take their freedom for themselves; it is because, weakened in the course of the second world war, imperialism was no longer able to resist the irresistidle liberation movements; and *it is above all because of the existence in the world today of a mighty, militarily and economically powerful alliance of socialist countries,* irreconcilably opposed to colonialism, which has unfurled the glorious banner of freedom and national independence throughout the world.

## THE LESSON OF SUEZ

The imperialists have not lost their appetite for colonies. They strive, by all means within their power, to get in through the back door after they have been thrown out of the front door—to regain through economic domination, the stranglehold they once held by political domination over economically-backward (backward *because* of their rule) countries. And if it were not for the constant challenge of the world socialist system, which they hate and fear but cannot destroy, they would attempt to restore direct colonialism tomorrow. Let us not forget the lesson of the Suez incident but a few years ago, when mighty Britain and France, invaded Egypt, backed up behind the scenes by the U.S.A. and openly by the army of Israel. The Egyptian people resisted gallantly—but it was the stern warning of the Soviet Government that sent the imperialists scuttling from Egypt with their tails between their legs: a warning that was backed up, as they well knew, by the might of a great power second to none in the world.

This is a lesson which we, and especially we Africans, can never afford to forget. We are proud of the many independent African States that have come forward in the past few years to claim their place as equals in the world family of nations. We know that their independence was dearly bought by our people in the course of desperate struggles against the colonialists. We know, too, and every African and Asian leader knows (though not all would be honest enough to admit it) that the brilliant and inspiring advance of national liberation in our times has been and still is made possible because, *on guard for peace and national independence,* stands the powerful alliance of the Socialist Commonwealth of nations, and in particular the formidable might of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, armed with a scientific, industrial, military and moral advantage—the fruit of forty-four years of socialism and workers' power—which imperialism cannot and dare not challenge.

As we are writing, a conference of uncommitted states is taking place in Belgrade, and many of our young African Republics are attending it. They have every right to do so, and indeed, for many of them their presence marks part of a healthy process of moving away from the "sphere of influence" of imperialism which they previously occupied. Nor can we doubt that the countries of Africa and Asia have a profound and important contribution to make to the cause of world peace. The speeches and resolutions of the conference strained to demonstrate its "impartiality" as between "East" and "West"; "favouring neither one side nor the other." A delegation was sent to Premier Khrushchev, another to President Kennedy. Calls were made, and properly so too, for disarmament, the banning of nuclear tests and weapons, great-power negotiations. But the crucial questions went unanswered: who in the world today stands for war, and who for peace and national independence? Although, in his heart, every delegate at Belgrade knew that not one of the States they represent would exist—there would be no Republic of India nor of Ghana, no socialist Yugoslavia—*but for the existence and the strength, the vigilance and the preparedness of the socialist camp.* And if, for whatever reason, that vigilance were to falter, if the imperialists were allowed once again to gain a preponderance in the world, it is precisely the "uncommitted," the smaller countries, the newly-liberated nations striving to overcome the crippling heritage of colonialism, that would be the first to suffer. And they know it.

## DISARMAMENT AND NUCLEAR TESTS

Only against this background can we adequately consider the stormy problems of present-day international affairs; the mounting tension over the proposed Soviet-German peace treaty; the extra 3,000-million dollars announced for U.S. armaments, followed by the Soviet resumption of nuclear tests. The Soviet Union has always demanded the outlawing and destruction of nuclear weapons. She was the first nuclear power to volunteer, unilaterally, to discontinue tests in the hope that others would follow her example. The immediate reaction of the Western powers was to intensify nuclear tests and it was only reluctantly that the United States and Britain, impelled by overwhelming public opinion, later suspended them.

It was therefore "with a heavy heart" (in the words of its official statement) that the Soviet Government announced its decision to resume tests of nuclear weapons, and this sadness and disappointment have been shared by many of its admirers and supporters.

Before hastening to condemn, however, it would be wiser to consider the whole picture. British and American politicians and newspapers have attacked the U.S.S.R., in the most intemperate language, for breaking the "gentlemen's agreement." But *it was not the Soviet Union which violated the "standstill" on nuclear tests; it was their own N.A.T.O. ally, France,* which exploded atomic bombs in Africa while Britain and the U.S. stood by and approved, abstaining when the General Assembly voted condemnation.

The blame must fall fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Western imperialist powers for wrecking the nuclear disarmament talks at Geneva, and turning them into a farce. As the long weary months of talk and negotiation stretched into years, it became more and more clear that agreement would never be reached ; for no-one can reach agreement with those who are determined from the start not to agree, who regard agreement as a disaster. For long, the American and British delegates declared that the difficulty was over methods of control ; every Soviet proposal for stricter control over disarmament and tests was dismissed as inadequate. At length the Russian delegate declared in advance that his Government would accept any proposals put forward by the N.A.T.O. powers. They failed to put forward any proposals at all.

They were terrified lest the Soviet Union might accept their proposals !

## THE GREATEST DANGER

The Soviet Union has repeatedly, through Premier Khrushchev, called for and urged agreement not only on the ending of nuclear tests, but on the outlawing of all weapons of mass destruction, the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons, for universal and complete disarmament. Now, nuclear tests, in themselves are of course, dangerous and harmful to life and health. But that is not the greatest danger and harm. The greatest danger is that of a nuclear world war in which hundreds of millions would die and the entire human race suffer untold loss and damage. And—so long as nuclear stockpiles exist and these frightful weapons are not outlawed —it is idle to imagine that any international war, no matter how started or by whom, could end other than as a nuclear war ; for warfare knows no other rules than the grim law of survival.

It is no service to the cause of peace to pretend that there is no danger of precisely such a war at the present time. The fact is that now, at the approach of the summer (the European winter) of 1961, the threat of a third world war being unleashed by the imperialists is grim and immediate. They have announced their intention of resorting to military measures, should the Soviet Union proceed with its declared intention of signing a peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic—a step, more than fifteen years after the end of the war, long overdue. They are rearming and expanding their armies at a feverish pace—in the words of the Soviet statement of August 31 :

> " The United States and its allies are spinning the flywheel of their military machine ever faster, whipping up the arms race to an unprecedented extent, increasing the strength of armies and making the tension in the international situation red hot."

British, American and French troops and tanks are being rushed to West Berlin—the forward post of imperialism in the heart of the socialist camp. West Germany is being turned into an armed camp, bristling with armaments, and pervaded with a brand of militarism which can only recall the days of Hitler's Reich. The goal of the Adenauer government, openly proclaimed, is a new war of revenge, to regain territories now part of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, and incorporate them in a new German state created by the violent overthrow and restoration to capitalism of the German Democratic Republic.

Once again, as in the days of 1938 and 1939, the Western imperialist powers are preparing a revived German militarism as the spearhead of an attack on the Soviet Union. West Berlin, their forward base, is being made the heart and centre of repeated provocations and acts of disruption, the jumping-off ground of a ceaseless stream of spies and saboteurs, to such an extent that only the sealing-off of boundaries which run through the heart of a great city could deal with the intolerable situation.

All the preparations and plans are openly being carried out to launch a catastrophic third world war.

## CAN IT BE STOPPED?

Can such a war be stopped ? Yes it can, and it must be. No more urgent and serious task faces the men and women of today, and if we fail future generations will curse us. But let us be clear: the main factor which makes it possible today to contemplate a world without war, the central prospect for peace in our time, is the strength of the Soviet Union, People's China and other countries of the socialist system, backed up by the active goodwill of hundreds of millions of peace-loving people the world over. It is useless appealing to the mercy or the humanitarian feelings of the imperialists. Twice in this century they have plunged the whole world into frightful wars claiming tens of millions of dead ; they will not scruple to do it again on an infinitely more horrible scale unless they are checked. And, profoundly regrettable and unpalatable it may be to have to say it : the fact is that, infinitely more effective than the eloquence and logic of Bertrand Russell and Jawaharlal Nehru to check the imperialists and bring them to their senses, is the fateful reverberations of the Soviet nuclear explosions. If we want peace, then we must want the forces of the socialist camp to be strong, for they are the main guardians of peace today. And if to sustain their strength, and not to fall behind in the race for technical mastery, they are compelled to nuclear tests, then that too is part of the price that must be paid. For, what is the alternative ?

The alternative is death. The alternative is war : the most unjust and reactionary war the world has ever known. A war for the millionaire imperialists of West Germany with their "rehabilitated" Nazi politicians and Hitlerite generals. A war against socialism, to turn the clock back, to recolonise Africa and Asia and to bring back and fortify imperialism, White domination and apartheid.

No one in Africa wants or needs such a war—unless it be the desperate gang around the traitor Tshombe—Africa's Chiang Kai-Shek—or the race-crazed fascists who govern the Republic of South Africa. On the contrary, we must do all in our power to avert and prevent it. And that is why, until such time as the aggressive imperialists are forced to negotiate and disarm, we must warmly welcome every step to make the military preparedness of the Soviet Union and its socialist sister-countries more effective, advanced and efficient.

That and nothing else is the purpose of the new Soviet nuclear tests.

> "The Soviet government," declares the August 31 statement, "would not be doing its sacred duty to the peoples of its country, to the people of the socialist countries and to all peoples striving for a peaceful life if, in the face of the threats and military preparations that have gripped the United States and certain other N.A.T.O. countries, it did not make use of all available possibilities for perfecting the most effective types of weapons that can cool the hotheads in the capitals of certain

N.A.T.O. powers."

The Soviet Union has solemnly declared *"that the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. will never be the first to resort to arms."* We have every confidence in the truth and sincerity of this declaration.

## COMMUNISM NEEDS PEACE

Soviet strength is meant for peace, not for war. It will never be used for conquest or aggression. The guarantee of that is to be found in the whole history and record of the Soviet Republic, in the outlook of its people, in the character of its society which contains no exploiting classes or private arms manufacturers who seek to profit from mass slaughter and destruction. No people is more bitterly opposed to war, more firmly devoted to defending peace, than those of the Soviet Union who can never forget the horror and devastation of the Hitlerite invasion of their country.

Above all, here is a people which is wholly absorbed in the lofty and gigantic task it has set itself : the building of Communism in the Soviet Union within the life-time of the present generation. No one who reads the new draft "Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union"—one of the most grandiose and inspiring documents ever produced by the Marxist-Leninist movement—without taking fire at the thrilling perspectives it unfolds of a new and better life for man ; the realisation of the dreams and hopes of all the greatest thinkers and teachers of humanity ; whose motto is "Everything in the name of man, for the benefit of man," and whose banner reads : "From each according to his ability ; to each according to his needs."

# THE MURDER OF EL HELOU

By its shameful treatment and eventual murder of the great Lebanese patriot and Communist, El Helou, the Nasser Government has brought shame to the United Arab Republic and to all Africa.

Farajallah El Helou was born in 1906 of a poor Lebanese peasant family. He spent his life in hard and self-sacrificing struggle against imperialism and colonialism, for the emancipation of his people and the cause of the working class. As a result of his leadership in the fifty-day long general strike in Damascus in 1936, directed against French imperialist domination, he was arrested by the French and deported from Syria. Arrested again during the war, Comrade El Helou delivered a daring speech in Court against the Nazi-dominated Vichy-French regime which at that time occupied Syria and Lebanon. He was given a sentence of five years' jail and 5,000 francs fine.

But this did not deter El Helou, who had been elected General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1937. He continued with the struggle when he was released on the downfall of the Vichy rule in 1941, and was one of the founders of the Lebanese National Congress and a leading architect of his country's independence. When, in 1957, the U.A.R. was formed as a union of Syria and Egypt, El Helou and other Communists warned against domination of the new State by Egyptian capitalism, and the strangling of Syrian democratic institutions by the Egyptian bourgeoisie headed by the militarist dictatorship of Nasser. These warnings were fully justified by events.

> "The Syrian economy was paralysed," writes Idris Cox (*World Review*, July 15, 1961). "The monopolist octopus, the Bank of Egypt, extended its grip to Syrian industry. The Syrian army was swamped with Egyptian high-rank officers to control it. The last forms of democracy were smashed to be substituted by Almabaheth—a variant of the Gestapo. Jails were flooded with the best sons of the Syrian people."

## TWO YEARS OF TORTURE

Because they fought with the same courage as always against this sort of vicious distortion of everything the Arab national movement had fought for, El Helou and other Communists and patriots were persecuted mercilessly by the U.A.R. Government. He was arrested by the Almabaheth in Damascus on June 25, 1959, whipped and thrown into Almazza prison. An eye-witness has reported how he was tortured until he was virtually torn to pieces and left naked and unconscious. The police demanded that he sign a declaration condemning the Communist Party. He defiantly refused. Followed more torture of this brave fifty-five year old man, for two years, until, in Cox's words: "He died as he lived—an unyielding fighter for national liberation, for democracy and for the rights of Arab toilers from whom he had sprung."

The Lebanese newspapers all paid tribute to El Helou and bitterly condemned his murder. Characteristic was the comment of *Aljom Horia,* which wrote:

"The banner of freedom which Nasser is supposed to be holding high, and for which he is fighting imperialism and imperialist lackies, cannot conform to the doctrines which allowed him to murder El Helou in this mean way . . . El Helou is dead, but to the whole of humanity he is a martyr who gave his life for the cause of freedom and his faith. He was a victim of those who trade in freedom."

The *African Communist* adds its voice to those who have protested against the murder of El Helou, patriot and hero. In the name of African solidarity and liberation, we appeal to the Government of the United Arab Republic in Cairo to open the dungeon doors and release many patriotic trade unionists, Communists and other sons of the Egyptian and Syrian people whose only crime is that they wish to carry the anti-imperialist revolution through to its consummation in the interests of the millions of poor workers and peasants.

## A ROTTEN REMNANT OF COLONIALISM

The persecution of Communists, trade unionists and other militant fighters for national liberation is of course a familiar feature of every colonial regime. It is notorious that the prisons of the French, British, Belgian, and other imperialist rulers of Africa and Asia, were always filled with patriots, Communists and non-Communists side by side ; that many were tortured and murdered. That is an old story. What is deplorable and terrible is that many parts of our Continent which have attained political independence continue to carry out *the very same repression of Communists and other workers' leaders as the colonialists did before them.*

We have written above of the position of Nasser's Egypt. But his case is not alone in Africa. For example, the military dictatorship of General Ibrahim Abboud in the *Sudan* has not only driven the Communist Party and all other political parties, as well as trade unions underground ; it has done to death many of the best sons of the Sudanese working class to death, and arrested hundreds many of whom, like the famous trade union leader, Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, are still in jail.

Again, from the Republic of Senegal come grim reports of repression taken by the Senghor government. The African Independence Party, a Marxist-Leninist organisation aiming at the complete emancipation of the country from French imperialism, has been driven underground, and its secretary, Majhmout Diop, and many other leaders and rank and filers subjected to long terms of detention. Anti-Communism is the ideology of the colonialists. Its persistence in nominally independent countries and among anticolonialist leaders not only gravely weakens the struggle for national freedom, but also casts grave doubts upon the sincerity and reliability of those leaders who give expression to this rotten remnant of colonialism.

## DEALS WITH IMPERIALISM

It is no accident that the same General Abboud has gravely weakened his country's independence by impermissible deals with U.S. imperialism, which place the Sudanese economy in the pockets of American dollar monopolists. It is not by chance that the anti-Communist President Senghor is amongst the most notorious of those "Black Frenchmen" who place the so-called French Community above the interests of their African fellow-countrymen and spends more time in Paris than in Dakar.

It is depressing to note that this infectious disease of anti-Communism now seems to have spread to the Protectorate of Basutoland, a small South African country which is subjected to a double oppression, dominated as it is politically by the United Kingdom and economically by the Republic. In the past the Basutoland Congress Party struggled vigorously for independence, but now its President, Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle has sunk to making unwarranted attacks on the fraternal African National Congress of South Africa, against the respected Congress leader, Nelson Mandela and on Basuto Communists. Once again, it hardly comes as a surprise when, in the same breath, Mr. Mokhehle now declares that he is no longer for Basuto independence, but only for "responsible government" under British auspices.

The pioneer Basuto organisation, the Lekhotla la Bafo under the leadership of the veteran patriot Josiel Lefela, always recognised the right of Basuto Communists to advocate their ideas, and —so different from the position in the neighbouring Republic— Marxist teachings have never been illegal in Basutoland. In departing from this healthy tradition, Mr. Mokhehle is not helping but harming the national struggle. We doubt very much whether he is really voicing the feelings of the members of the B.C.P., or whether, in accordance with democratic principles, he has even taken the trouble to consult them before making such far-reaching and irresponsible statements.

# The Economics of Neo-Colonialism

## *The New Imperialism in Africa*

by M. DECKER

It has become quite the fashion for Social-Democrats in the old imperialist countries to vie with right-wing politicians in pronouncing imperialism to be dead and in proclaiming a new era of disinterested "aid to underdeveloped countries" which is said to have taken its place. In Britain Fabian "Socialists" join hands with the Tory ministers in rejecting what they call "clichés about imperialism and colonialism," and it is only poor old-timers like Mr. Churchill who find it hard to learn the new language and who persist in saying "colonial" instead of "backward" or "underdeveloped," and "imperial" instead of "metropolitan".

Unfortunately, the realities of present-day imperialism cannot be conjured away by juggling with words, although magical word play has always been dear to the hearts of those who do not wish to change social reality.

It is true that imperialist exploitation in the modern era has had to adjust its methods to the new conditions created by the successful struggle of colonial people for national independence. But this would not be the first time that imperialism has changed its methods. During the period when merchant capital held sway in Europe the economic exploitation of overseas territories was carried on by the methods of what Marx so aptly called "primitive accumulation", that is to say, piracy, outright plunder, the profits of the slave traffic and so forth. But these methods, which laid the foundation for the development of industrial capitalism in Western Europe, became obsolete when industrial capitalism had itself reached a certain stage of development. They then gave way to even more effective methods of exploitation based on the export of capital necessitating the outright political annexation of the colonial territories.

To-day, the mounting tide of the anti-colonialist movement of the impoverished masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America has forced the imperialists to give up direct colonial rule because it is no longer profitable to them. The prospect of facing exhausting and interminable colonial wars all over the world has proved too much for the imperialist powers. A well-known bourgeois economist has expressed the modern imperialist point of view quite precisely: "In the dependencies which still linger, the military and other expenses needed to maintain the régime, the costs and losses caused by popular revolts, and the financial burden of necessary social reforms and investments in economic development, take the profitability out of the colonial system."[1] The old system has therefore been "rejuvenated" by the introduction of a few new tricks designed to restore to it its previous "profitability".

## COMPRADOR ELEMENTS

In particular, the new imperialism relies more heavily than the old on the local comprador elements in the colonial countries. These elements include merchant capitalists tied up with foreign enterprise, industrial monopolists whose monopolistic status would be swept away by further industrial development and feudal landowners. The governments of these comprador elements obediently serve the interests of their imperialist masters. Those interests demand the continuation of the most extreme forms of economic exploitation, the suppression of the working masses, particularly of working class organization, and the diversion of the entire resources of the country to the benefit of foreign investors. These new-style colonial régimes are inevitably characterized by extreme official corruption and by the squandering of national wealth on the maintenance of sprawling bureaucracies and military establishments, the sole function of which is to keep the comprador régime in power. In the modern period the comprador elements are supported more openly than ever before. They not only receive political subsidies, they are also given direct military assistance in their struggle against the democratic forces of their own country.

Small wonder that the new political forms have not led to any change in the essential economic relationships between imperialist and colonial countries. The latter retain their status as suppliers of raw material for the industries of the West, and as such are exposed to the fluctuations of the capitalist market. It is estimated that the drop in the relative prices of raw materials during the 1958/9 crisis cost the "underdeveloped" countries of the world over one and a half billion dollars in twelve months[2], which is considerably more than the total "aid" received from the old imperialist countries and from such agencies as the World Bank and the U.N. Moreover, many of the ex-colonial countries continue to depend on a single crop for the bulk of their foreign exchange, for example, cocoa in Ghana, coffee in Ethiopia, cotton in the Sudan, and so on. But most striking of all is the continued dependence of many so-called independent countries on trade with their particular imperialist power which continues to enjoy most of the old monopoly privileges in this field. Thus, a recent U.N. survey commented on the fact that about 70 per cent of the trade of French African territories is with France: "This quasi-dependence on a single market both for goods and capital makes the French territories particularly vulnerable to French economic and political conditions".[3] Needless to say, the Portuguese and former British territories find themselves in a similar position.

Nor has there been any change in the classical imperialist relationship that involved the draining off of the wealth of the colony by the "mother" country in the form of dividends and interest on capital invested in the colony. The total loss suffered by underdeveloped countries through this source is estimated at more than 1½ billion dollars annually[4] — not counting the fantastic profits of the oil companies, which in the case of Britain alone come to over £300 million a year. It also does not include the almost one thousand million pounds of sterling balances which the colonial and ex-colonial countries in the sterling area have been forced to accumulate in Britain. Since these balances represent the difference between the colonies' receipts from abroad and their payments to other countries, they constitute the colonial world's capital **export** to Britain!

These vast sums are utilized by the imperialist countries for further investment, particularly in building up their own economies. In France, for example, it is estimated that in 1957 15 per cent of the invesments effected in metropolitan France originated from overseas French capital.[5] Small wonder that the gap between the living standards of the population in the industralized and in the underdeveloped part of the capitalist world is growing bigger every year. Bourgeois economists shed crocodile tears over the fact that "the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer". But they seek the reason for this state of affairs in the supposedly small capital surplus in the ex-colonial countries. Facts show, however, that this surplus is not so small at all; but as long as it is utilized for the benefit of the imperialists and their agents rather than for that of the peoples of the ex-colonial countries, the latter are bound to get relatively and in many cases absolutely poorer every year. In this connection it is of interest to note that while in 1949 China produced less than half as much electricity as Africa, it increased its production ten times in ten years and now produces far more electricity than Africa.[6] This comparison shows that only when the masses of a backward country throw off imperialist control completely are they able to start that "steep ascent" which will bring them level with the most advanced industrialized countries.

## "ECONOMIC AID"

Among the special tactics employed by the new imperialism to perpetuate the effective enslavement of the former colonial countries the use of what is called "economic aid" is of particular importance. Whereas in the classical period of colonialism, imperialist control over the resources of the colonies was naked and direct, the new imperialism has to adopt more indirect methods. Moreover, whereas in the "good old days" of imperialism the perpetual backwardness of the colony could be taken for granted, nowadays some sort of pretence has to be made of planning for the advancement of backward areas. Economic "aid" schemes organized by the imperialist countries admirably fulfilled both purposes. On the one hand, they enable the imperialist country to tighten its control over its "sphere of influence" and to block any attempts there at genuine development towards real political and economic independence. On the other hand, it enables imperialist propaganda to hide the harsh realities of exploitation behind a smokescreen of so-called aid to underdeveloped regions.

Some forms of "aid" actually have purely a propaganda function, being much too insignificant to make the slightest difference to the economic life of the colonial regions receiving it. Thus, between 1946 and 1958 the average annual value of "Colonial Development and Welfare Grants" to all British African territories was about four million pounds sterling. When one compares this with the £83 million that *one* British firm, Unilevers, notorious for its share in the exploitation of Africa, spent in **one** year on advertising one gets a fair idea of the magnitude of capitalist generosity. Some so-called development plans in Africa do not even involve token sums. In these cases the magic term "plan" is simply applied to the routine expenditure of the colonial administration, as in the case of Uganda. So blatant is this propaganda trick that even the U.N. economic report on Africa complains that these are not plans at all but ordinary budgets. Another trick is to include the inflated salaries of colonial administrators in the published figures for "aid to underdeveloped territories". That this can be a very important item is shown by the fact that between 1952 and 1957 French capital transfers to Tropical Africa and Madagascar involved a rise from 4.4 per cent to 37.8 per cent of the total.[7]

Such investments as are made by the imperialist countries aim only at perpetuating the status of the colonial countries as suppliers of raw materials lacking any industry of their own and at facilitating the exploitation of their resources by foreign capitalists. Speaking of the African colonial territories, the Organization for European Economic Co-operation states: "The territories can make an important contribution to the defence of the free world to which they belong particularly by increasing their production of materials."[8] In view of the dependence of the "free world's" supply of raw materials on their transport from the interior of the colonial countries it is not surprising that so large a part of capitalist "aid" is devoted to transport facilities. In West Africa the proportion of "development funds" devoted to transport has generally varied between a quarter and a half. This simply perpetuates the typical pattern of colonial style development with its emphasis on the construction of railways, roads and harbours simply and solely to facilitate the export of raw materials. Such "development", so far from aiding the further growth of a country's economy, serves to stultify it and to reinforce the colonial pattern of the economy ever more firmly.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the mere building of a railway, a bridge, etc., is not necessarily of advantage to a country. On the contrary, it may be merely a means of extracting interest for foreign-owned companies who are the sole effective users of these transport facilities. Even such an eminently respectable bourgeois economist as Prof. S. H. Frankel, of Oxford, is ready to make this point: "It is very common nowadays to suggest that the provision of capital in any form is necessarily advantageous to the recipient society and automatically produces 'income'. Nothing could be further from the truth. The history of such 'investments' in Africa and elsewhere affords many examples of railway lines, roads, ports, irrigation works, etc., in the 'wrong places' which not only failed to lead to income-generating development, but actually inhibited more economic development which might otherwise have taken place."[9]

Capitalists investing money in the extraction of raw materials have usually refused to build their own transport and power facilities, to provide for the housing and education of their workers etc. They have done this because they did not regard investment in such projects as sufficiently profitable. Their governments have always seen to it that these facilities were provided for them by utilizing taxes forced out of the inhabitants of the raw material producing countries. Often, these taxes would be used to pay the interest on loans made by bondholders in the imperialist country. In many nominally independent ex-colonial countries nothing has changed in this situation, except that the services rendered to the foreign capitalists are now euphemistically referred to as "aid" or "development plans." But in countries controlled by comprador régimes the only aid that exists is aid for the imperialists and their collaborators, and the only kind of development is the development of corruption and of super-profits.

## THWARTING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The one kind of development which all imperialist sponsored economic plans are designed to prevent is *Industrial* development, for this would inevitably change the dependent status of the ex-colonial territory. The primary aim of these colonial and post-colonial "development plans" has always been to perpetuate the country's position as a backward, raw-materials producing appendage to some imperialist power. The U.N. Economic Report on Africa speaks of investment under development plans "favouring those branches of production whose output would be entirely absorbed by the metropolitan country, or where exports would benefit, in particular, the balance of payments of the metropolitan country."[10] It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in French tropical Africa far less than 1 per cent of the commitments authorized in December 1954 were for the promotion of industry, that the Nigerian Development Plan allocated 3.5 per cent of its funds for industry between 1951 and 1956 and only 1.3 per cent for that purpose in the following five year period.[11] Indeed, bourgeois writings on the subject abound with warnings against "over-emphasis" on industrialization, against "fanatical natonalism leading to excessive haste in industrial development," and the like. Yet, as Lenin so often pointed out, the salvation of a poor and backward country lies in the rapid building up of a strong industrial base.[12] The alternative is continued social backwardness, political corruption and economic enslavement.

The pattern of the new style imperialism emerges particularly clearly in the relation of the United States to the underdeveloped part of the capitalist world. The aims of American economic "aid" to former colonial countries have been set out very clearly in a number of documents. In the first place, such aid is designed to create conditions for the more effective exploitation of the resources of the recipient country by American capital. According to President Eisenhower, the aims of American foreign policy could be defined as "doing whatever our Government can properly do to encourage the flow of private investment abroad. This involves, as a serious and explicit purpose of our foreign policy, the encouragement of a hospitable climate for such investment in foreign countries".[13] The encouragement of such a climate, of course, involves the support of the most corrupt and undemocratic comprador régimes wherever possible and supplying them with the means for suppressing the legitimate demands of the working people of their country. It involves the stifling of economic development and of social reforms. These countries are to be forced to remain backward suppliers of raw materials for the American economy and a paradise for the American investor in search of super-profits.

A favourite propaganda device of American imperialism has been the slogan of American "anticolonialism" which was used even before the last World War as a weapon to pry open the spheres of influence of the older imperialist powers for American business. When they appear as newcomers on the scene American capitalists always come as the "sympathetic friends" of the colonial people who are trying to throw off the imperialist yoke. But once economic relations between a backward country and the United States develop, the pattern established is essenially indistinguishable from that which existed in the old colonial empires. One only needs to look at the history of the United States' economic relationships with the countries of Latin America and the Philippines to get ample confirmation of this.

## U.S. MILITARY "AID"

A paricularly important aspect of the relationship of United States imperialism to backward countries within its sphere of influence is the military one. Between 1950 and 1956, for instance, 56 per cent of all United States "aid" was military aid, and only 44 per cent was "economic" aid. Moreover, a large part of the latter comes under the so-called Defence Support Programme and consists of subventions for the U.S. puppet régimes in South Korea, Taiwan and South Viet Nam; in fact these three territories receive about a third of all American "economic" aid. It would therefore be no exaggeration to say that the considerations governing U.S. assistance to underdeveloped countries were primarily military in character. These military considerations are not only concerned with the preparations for war against the socialist countries. In fact modern developments in military techniques have made these American bases on foreign territory largely obsolete. They do, however, retain a far more immediate usefulness for

American imperialism in providing it with a system of strongpoints all over the globe from which democratic and anti-imperialist governments may be threatened and through which the hand of the comprador régimes may be strengthened. Events have proved, however, that these plans of the imperialists are out of touch with present-day reality, which is governed by the whole world's revulsion against imperialism backed by the might of the socialist countries.

Much of the so-called American aid to underdeveloped countries comes under the "Basic Materials Development Programme", which, according to the U.N. Economic Report in Africa, "has been directly related to development expenditure financing primarily projects facilitating the exploitation of strategic raw materials resources".[14] Such aid merely perpetuates the colonial status of the recipient country and is designed to tie it ever more closely to the American war economy. Other United States "aid" to Africa has taken the form of dumping surplus American farm products, a move designed to aid the American capitalists rather than the economy of the African recipient countries. The largest receiver of United States assistance on the Continent has undoubtedly been the Government of South Africa, whose arrant Fascism is no doubt reassuring to American policy-makers and whose brutal racialism has so many sympathizers in the United States itself.

A growing form of American "aid" to Africa is constituted by loans of the World Bank. This organization is nominally international in character, but its president and most of its staff have been recruited from American banking circles. Moreover, it has the closest links with Wall Street, whose investors provide the World Bank with most of its funds, which it lends to its "beneficiaries" at over 6 per cent interest. In fact, the Bank acts very much like the big 19th century merchant bankers in Europe, the Rothchilds and the Barings, for instance, who often introduced the bonds of foreign countries to conservative French and British investors. In the middle of the twentieth century the World Bank acts as a shield for American monopolists who want the super-profits of colonial-style investments without any risks. Thus, the American Steel companies, for example, who were interested in the profits to be obtained from exploiting the manganese deposits of Gabon, were able to avoid all risk by hiding behind a World Bank loan supported by several of the big American insurance companies. Similar manoeuvres have been carried out by the big American aluminium companies in their efforts to gain control of

Africa's vast resources of bauxite. This kind of operation is, of course, as old as imperialism itself; what is new is the jargon of "international co-operation", "aid" and "development" with which the new imperialism surrounds itself.

## PROTECTING PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Engaged in what one bourgeois economist terms "this peculiarly profitable and riskless line of humanitarian business",[15] the World Bank and its Wall Street allies are naturally concerned to keep their one hundred million dollars net annual profits for the benefit of "private enterprise". In countries like India and Mexico the Bank has therefore spared no effort at sabotaging nationalized industry, and in all underdeveloped countries it has sought above all to inhibit industrial development. In its report the World Bank describes its activities as constituting "steps to encourage a more favourable climate for private business," which is no doubt why in its African operations it has so strongly favoured that citadel of private business, South Africa. For poor countries with democratic governments it has only the old imperialist warning cliché: "Excessive emphasis on industry for industry's sake, above all, heavy industry, may leave an underdeveloped country with the symbol of development rather than the substance."[16] It is not quite clear what is meant by this; perhaps Sputnik was only the symbol of industrial development, whereas Coca-Cola is to be regarded as its substance?

Worried by the growing economic ties between the Soviet Union and the poorer capitalist countries, the American imperialists have in recent years launched a succession of new "aid" plans which held the stage for a while until they in turn were exposed and discredited. Such, for instance, is the International Development Association which was supposed to hand out a kind of international soup-kitchen aid. But as this new institution was not only designed but entirely managed by the president of the World Bank and his staff, its policies were hardly likely to be philanthropic. The same observation applies essentially to the other international organizations that are supposed to be concerned with the problems of underdeveloped countries. These organizations, staffed and controlled almost entirely by experts from the imperialist countries, appear to run on the principle that the best way of dealing with the problems of underdeveloped countries is to divert attention from them. Thus, the central U.N. Technical Assistance Office is reported as employing less than half a dozen full-time experts on problems of industrialization,[17] a subject on which technical advice is urgently needed in dozens of U.N. member countries. The activities of UNESCO in the field of village training again, are summed up by a British observer as "diverting attention from the stern realities of the agrarian revolution".[18] While their control remains firmly in imperialist hands, the various international aid organisations are not likely to aid anyone but the new-style imperialists and their comprador friends.

## CONTRAST OF SOCIALIST AID

How different is the attitude of the socialist states to the economic problems of underdeveloped countries! The ever-increasing volume of Soviet aid is directed primarily at helping these countries to industrialise and to produce not only consumer goods but also the capital goods which are so important for their future social and economic development. The socialist states do not seek to draw any profits from the projects which they support in the underdeveloped countries, and their aid is given on terms which are highly advantageous to these countries.

In 1961 the Soviet Union alone will take part in the construction of some 380 industrial plants in other countries under Technical Co-operation agreements.[19] Other plants are being built with the assistance of Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist states. In the United Arab Republic the Soviet Union is assisting with the construction of no fewer than 90 industrial and other projects, including the High Aswan Dam, which is of basic importance to the economy of the U.A.R.[20] In Ghana the Soviet Union is to assist in the construction of a big hydro-electric plant on the Black Volta. Other major industrial schemes are being undertaken with Soviet help in Guinea and Mali. But compared with the importance that aid from the socialist countries has achieved in the economic development of countries like Afghanistan, India, Indonesia and Cuba, the volume of such aid flowing to Africa is still relatively small. This is due to the strong grip which the imperialist powers still exercize over many of the nominally independent African territories.

In the future, however, economic and technical assistance from the socialist countries can confidently be expected to play an ever-increasing role in assisting Africa to exploit its immense resources for its own benefit. For Africa, whose economic development has been so effectively inhibited by colonialism and, even before that, by the horrors of the slave trade, is potentially one of the richest areas of the world. African water-power resources are estimated to be more than three times as great as those of Europe, but less than one per cent of this potential was in fact developed under the colonial system. African reserves of iron ore are known to be larger than those of any other region of the world, and deposits of oil and coal are vast. The manganese deposits in Gabon alone are believed to be second only to those at Nikopol in the Ukraine, and there are many other deposits of manganese elsewhere in Africa. Its vast resources of bauxite are fast making Africa one of the world's most important sources of aluminium. When the apologists and "experts" of the new imperialism claim that industrialization is "premature" or "inappropriate" in Africa, they are speaking without reference to the facts. Real economic development is indeed impossible for those large areas in Africa which remain effectively under imperialist control. But such a state of affairs is not immutable. The growing co-operation between the socialist states and underdeveloped countries provides striking proof that the socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the social and economic development of most of the world's population.

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# Bourguiba and Africa

by M. HARMEL

Secretary of the Tunisian Communist Party

**The clash with French imperialism over the military base at Bizerta has recently focussed African attention on Tunis. Useful background material on the strangely ambiguous policy of the Tunisian Government, headed by President Bourguiba, is provided by this interesting analysis, written by Comrade Mohamed Harmel. The article has been freely translated from the French journal "Democracie Nouvelle."**

During a recent meeting with French students visiting Tunisia, President Bourguiba put forward an idea which runs like a thread through all official propaganda: "The pattern of our successful achievements may be applied, not only to North Africa, but to the entire African continent." Tunisia's experience, called 'Bourguibism,' is thus held up as an example to other peoples of our continent.

It must be said at the outset that the steps by which independence is gained in one country are not necessarily right for all other countries. In line with other Tunisian tendencies, 'Bourguibism' has an essentially internal character. Nevertheless, Tunisia has gradually begun to set up her schemes and methods to challenge the pattern of other developments in Africa.

Now, while it cannot be denied that Tunisia's experience teaches useful lessons, yet it must be recognised that not all of them are acceptable — far from it. Therefore it must be analysed in detail to find its true significance — for Tunisia itself and for the continent in general.

Two unreal attitudes are currently put forward:

> One which sees only the negative aspects of Tunisia's policies and which denies the government any anti-imperialist role; and one which sees only the anti-imperialist character of the Tunisian government, thereby ignoring the dangerous exploitation of Tunisia's foreign policies by the so-called 'free world', which assigns to our country a tricky role in neo-colonialism's activities in Africa.

Both attitudes must be rejected.

## BOURGUIBISM

What, then, is 'Bourguibism' to employ the term which now is used to describe the course of events in Tunisia? What does it actually stand for? Where is it going and in what direction should it be led?

At the head of the country Bourguiba plays an important role. As President of the State and leader of the Neo-Destour (government) party, he wields practically absolute power. He has much to his credit. He has taken an outstanding share in the country's struggle for independence. A man of the people, he is inspired by an ardent patriotism. Boldly he recognised, even in the 'thirties, that, because it lacked daring and the will-to-fight, the leadership of the Destour at that time could not inspire the national struggle. With others he created the Neo-Destour which assumed a leading role in the national movement. As the Neo-Destour gained popularity from the Movement's successes, so Bourguiba's popularity and authority increased greatly.

A 'cult of the personality' carried to extreme, however, began to attribute to him alone all the merit for national victories, relegating to second place the essential activities of the masses, and ignoring the sometimes favourable circumstances and conditions, both internal and external. If self-government has moved rapidly towards independence, other factors have certainly had something to do with it, such as the armed struggle of the Algerian people, French Imperialism's fear of having to fight on three fronts, the proclamation of Morocco's independence, the change in the balance of world forces on the side of liberty and peace and the resounding victory of Dien Bien Phu.

Nevertheless, it remains true that the march of events in Tunisia demonstrates the possibility, under certain circumstances, of profiting from the contradictions of imperialism in order to reach a fixed objective after making concessions and compromises. It will be seen in the following pages how this process of concessions and compromises, which is at the heart of the Bourguibist strategy, loses its original validity when it is put forward as the basis of a system which may be utilised by all the peoples of Africa, and reveals itself as having a restricted applicability.

'Bourguibism' is certainly not a doctrine. It is a collection of ideas and empirical methods, including the practice of compromise. In this mixture we find various doctrinal influences, all of them bourgeois. It accommodates contradictory standpoints, even some of which are diametrically opposed to each other. Under the pressure of events, it accepts an idea which previously in the name of this same 'Bourguibism' it had rejected. For instance, the concept of planning, violently opposed in 1956, is exalted in 1961 which has become in government propaganda the Year of Planning. And, of course, this is reached in a systematic way to make a virtue out of some kind of necessity.

This political empiricism is presented as a doctrine both to demolish other doctrines considered dangerous and to give it weight and advantage in the competition with such other doctrines.

Official propaganda attempts to disguise the class nature of 'Bourguibism'. The National State, born of independence, should not have a class character at all, but the most advanced elements of the masses see ever more clearly that political power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. There has been progress from the old order of things, but all the national, democratic aspirations of the people have not been realised. The double, equivocal role played by the national bourgeosie, accounts for this failure, for it is at one and the same time progressive and reactionary.

The Tunisian national bourgeoisie is in the main middle-class. Reduced to small numbers, squeezed out from secondary industries, it was economically and financially feeble. Its most forceful members, grouped in the Neo-Destour, have played a leading role in the national movement. Despite temporary setbacks and hesitations, this class, pushed on by the masses, moved forward and kept in its hands the leadership of the movement, because the movement was concerned with the conquest of political independence.

With independence, this class is now installing itself in positions of power and showing ever more clearly its inadequacies and its weaknesses in dealing with its own people and with imperialism. In the economic field, while those groups who were part and parcel of the colonial system (top functionaries in the colonial régime, big landowners and collaborators) have been relegated to inferior positions, if not eliminated, the national bourgeoisie, often in a confused way but with great greed, grab any sectors of the economy which can bring them profits. Some replace the French in a few small industries, others open up new factories, especially in footwear and textiles. Still others have entrenched themselves in sectors which produce quick and easy profits: real estate speculation and import-export trade which before independence were the preserves of foreigners and in businesses of all kinds. The newly-rich and the privileged come forward with their demands, which are often in opposition to those of the masses.

In the sphere of politics the national bourgeoisie finds itself in a single political party in which different interests are reflected in a free-for-all fashion by means of groupings, unorganised and without clearcut political policies. These groups and sub-groups are united round President Bourguiba, whom they seek to influence in the direction of their interests and aspirations. Bourguiba expresses and aligns himself with the ideological and political interests of the national bourgeoisie as a whole. In his thoughts and actions he never goes beyond the basic interests of the national bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, he is neither a capitalist nor a property owner. He is an intellectual, a product of the petit-bourgeoisie. As he does not completely identify himself with any of the different groups surrounding him, he is able to arbitrate in their interests, to override at times the interests of this or that section and the ideas of this or that group without going beyond the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie. This gives him a degree of mobility, a capacity to adapt himself to changes, even to go forward, and to consolidate more effectively the political power of the national bourgeoisie.

## ACTS OF POWER

Within President Bourguiba's policy, there is indeed a line which, although it does not move outside the framework and the perspectives held by the bourgeoisie, coincides with the interests of the entire nation.

The government has solidified the political independence of the country and attained, with the support of the people, the evacuation of foreign troops from the whole territory, with the exception of Bizerta. Despite French pressure, it has maintained its solidarity with the Algerian people. It has put an end to the monarchy, instituted a Republic and wiped out vestiges of the old feudalism, already in an advanced state of decomposition ; it has modified certain rooted customs particularly with regard to the status of women, and has defended tolerance and a rational attitude in the sphere of religion.

But in other fields the government policy is particularly negative.

It may be said : in Tunis there are social laws, for example the Social Security law. But this fails to mention that wages have not risen since 1955, while the cost of living has constantly been increasing, and that several social victories gained by the working class at the cost of heavy sacrifice have been reduced in scope.

It may be said: there is a trade union organisation. But this fails to indicate that the movement has been stripped of all independence and simply transformed into an appendix of the government.

It may be said: we have nationalised to a certain extent, distributed land to the peasants, gone in for planning and even for a type of "Tunisian socialism". But this fails to specify that these reforms were for a long time previously a part of economic liberalism whereby an absolute confidence was created for local and foreign investors and whereby the "enrich-yourselves" formula could be operated without taking into account the demands of planned development. This fails to specify that in spite of opting for planning, Tunis has not undertaken structural and agrarian reforms, which are essential to a genuine struggle against underdevelopment.

It may be said: we have a Constitution, elected assemblies, a free press, and even a legal Communist Party. But this fails to state the direct and indirect restrictions on public liberty, the monopolisation of political life by the government party that retains for itself control of employment and utilises this "advantage" in a country where there are 300,000 unemployed. It fails to mention all manner of fetters on legal activities of the Tunisian Communist Party.

However, in examining at close range what is offered as the "model" of Tunisian experience, it is more important to attend to the external political aspects than the internal.

It is paradoxical that a government, which has arisen from the national movement and which still has, in spite of inadequacies and limitations, a national function, practices a pro-western foreign policy.

The explanation for this phenomenon is the fact that the Tunisian government has adhered to the "free world" because of its class ideologies. It desires a victory for capitalism in its competition with socialism.

The Tunisian government turns a blind eye to the ugly reality of the "free world". It ignores the reality that it is an imperialist system, comprising not only the traditional colonial powers, but also America, a newcomer which is already using new forms of domination, less direct, more subtle but more detestable. The "free world" would be a "healthy body" but for debilitating duties which have been forced on to it. President Bourguiba said this in a discussion at UNO on 22nd November, 1956:

> "Having developed in the sphere of the democratic and liberal West, the African peoples have based their political patterns on that model. The great principles of 1789, the Wilsonian doctrine, the rule of law, these concepts hold great sway in their social thinking. With their awakening to independence, the African peoples have unearthed their latent tradition of democratic liberation, bringing them very close to the States of the 'free world'.
>
> "Their economic resources are complementary to those of the Western countries, more particularly those of Europe. The development of their resources, the reconversion from a colonial to an independent national economy, will not lesson their need to co-operate with the West, for a liberal and prosperous economy cannot afford to dispense with exchange. Thus African nationalism naturally finds itself joined to the West, and, even if it retains a certain resentment towards the colonial nations of the West, it recognises that its future is bound to them." (Article by Bourguiba published in the magazine Foreign Affairs, July 1957).

This philosophy explains why Tunisian foreign policy has begun to distinguish itself by an extremely forceful pro westernism. The Tunsian government refuses to establish even diplomatic relations with the socialist countries. It participated in the UNO Commission on Hungary and went as far as proclaiming its adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine (9th May, 1957).

This pro-westernism has not prevented the government from energetically defending the sovereignty of the country and of denouncing the conditions of American aid. The government has also affirmed that the "free world" that it accepts is not what it is but what it should be! While defending the West, Tunis continues to beg it to change its policy, to grant effective aid, even to renounce colonialism and to put up a new facade. The government claims that it is possible to "amend" imperialism.

Nevertheless, this concept conflicts increasingly with reality. Apologist arguments are destroyed by developments in the international situation. The argument that our geographic position forces such an attitude on us is no longer valid, since other countries, even closer to the "West" than we are, have been granted independence and are consolidating it while improving their relations with the socialist countries. The argument that this policy is justified by attempts to coerce America to aid Algeria vanishes as the United States continues to give material and political aid to the French colonialists. Finally, the argument that this policy will gain for us American aid appears to be groundless when it becomes clear that our country is depriving itself of the known advantages of assistance from the socialist camp, without obtaining any effective aid from America.

## 'BOURGUIBISM' IN AFRICA

Isolated in this excessive pro-westernism, "penalised" in some measure (according to the formula used by President Bourguiba), Tunisia should abandon this orientation, re-examine its attitude to the East and proclaim non-involvement as its official policy. Normal diplomatic relations should be established with the USSR and with Czechoslovakia, an official undertaking given to recognise People's China and a start made in economic co-operation with these countries. Unfortunately such a development would soon be upset by the appearance of new forms of pro-westernism.

America has given indications of a changed attitude in regard to real aid to under-developed countries, providing this government remains securely in the western orbit.

But what is of even greater gravity is the attitude of Tunis to recent African problems.

Almost breaking away from African solidarity over the Congo affair, the government was the only one amongst recently liberated countries publicly to criticise Lumumba. It was alone in not recognising his legal government after the Kasavubu and Mobutu plot, and it was alone in supporting Hammarskjold. Far from perceiving the real causes of the Congolese situation, i.e., the aims of Belgian and American neo-colonialism in using UNO and its General Secretary, Tunisia has trumped up other explanations: immaturity on the part of the Congolese and the cold war . . . .

Other attitudes she has taken up underline this difference which sets Tunis apart in the Afro-Asian camp.

The countries of the "Community" are regarded by Tunisia with what amounts to caution, while Mauritania was immediately recognised and received an official delegation from Tunis.

Thus the idea grew up of, on the one hand, a revolutionary Africa, "subservient to Russia", and on the other a moderate Africa, which included Tunis. Her role, it was said, would be far more "precious" than if she were assimilated with the countries of the Community. Now she was really independent and could enjoy a prestige commensurate with her past struggles.

## PLAYING THE U.S. GAME

How the Americans encourage such a tendency and see in it an unexpected trump for their machinations in Africa ! In western publications and in the declarations of statesmen, Tunisian "moderation" has become the subject of eulogies ; they flatter the country, the government's foreign conduct and her African policy; at the same time Kennedy invites Bourguiba to visit the U.S.A. While Tunisia has few riches which could attract American imperialists, they are interested in the political role which she can play in Africa, and the use that can be made of her African policy. This is precisely what an American ambassador in Tunis implied when he affirmed: "Tunis is a small military power but it possessed the moral capacity to wield a world-wide influence". And 'Bourguibism' runs wild once out of the hands of its own promoters. For example, the puppets of the Community are becoming 'Bourguibists', so-called partisans of 'Bourguibism', a "doctrine" which they oppose to "rowdy demagogy", to use the phrase of Ahidjo, Ambassador of the Cameroons in Tunis.

Even with regard to Algeria we find in Bourguiba this obsession to apply "the Tunisian scheme".

In point of fact, the Tunisian government has made great efforts to aid its brother people, and her solidarity has rarely defaulted. (I say rarely because there was the episode of the Edjelè petrol, which the Tunisian government allowed to pass through Tunis in spite of protests from the F.L.N.) It is not this solidarity which is questioned, nor the important and valued contribution of the Tunisian people and government to the struggle of the Algerian people. What is at issue is this desire to apply the "Tunisian scheme" to a more complex situation, totally different from ours. The Algerian situation is characterised by a national armed struggle, organised on a great scale and directed against an ancient colonialism represented by De Gaulle, who holds the riches of the Sahara and who is afraid of the consequences of an Algerian revolution in Algeria and in all Africa.

"If I were in the place of Ferhat Abbas, I should have responded to De Gaulle's invitation and gone to Paris," President Bourguiba said one day. The Tunisian government will continue, in other forms, to proffer their "advice to their brother Algerians". Meanwhile they themselves risk the charges that they are intransigent, that they lack flexibility, and that they have illusions about De Gaulle.

For a short period they held back when De Gaulle's first manoeuvres had been completely uncovered. They recognised their error in trusting De Gaulle, but they returned to his fold soon enough afterwards. In June 1960 the President declared to the old de Melun: "Thanks to the wisdom and courage of General de Gaulle, France is now on the road leading to the fulfilment of your aspirations . . . ."

And when the French President was obliged by the pressure of the Algerian people, of the French people, and of international opinion to retreat once more and to renounce the cease-fire, without renouncing, as is obvious today, all his machinations, then he invited Bourguiba to Paris. What optimism !

Our government would undoubtedly like to see some direct negotiation, and the Algerian question showing progress. But the Gaullist manoeuvres continue, necessitating increased pressure on him, rather than relaxation, to compel him to negotiate on a just basis.

Even today the Tunisian government holds that the problem is the subject of negotiation and insists on the spirit of compromise – even though no negotiations are in progress.

"I must say to my Algerian brothers that in a negotiation of such gravity they must be able to distinguish what is important from what is not important for there is a principle involved and it is important." (Recent debate in the National Assembly).

But the crux of the matter is to know what is essential and what is trivial, not according to the Tunisian conditions of 1954-1956, but according to the Algerian conditions today and the aims of French imperialism in the Sahara.

In the Tunisian set-up, there is always the illusion that a solution can be achieved "in the framework of the west". This explains why Bourguiba is forever trying to persuade the United States to stop supporting France in the Algerian war and to safeguard the opportunities of the west, of the "free world", of capitalism. He wants the West to become involved on the "safe" side. Even when he declares himself prepared to accept assistance from the USSR and from China for Algeria, he does not despair of seeing the USA intervene . . . . There is a more or less subtle game here which aims at using certain contradictions between the USA and France, and sometimes even between the socialist and the capitalist countries.

## AFRICA'S MORTAL ENEMY

If certain African countries are able to profit from the contradictions of imperialism (aggravated besides by the presence of the socialist camp and its policy of giving unconditional support to the national liberatory movements) to obtain political independence or other concessions from the imperial powers, this should not create the illusion that all African countries can obtain the same favourable treatment. Nor, above all, should it create the illusion that they can obtain for their economic liberation the understanding and sympathy, if not from their one-time oppressors directly at least from the U.S.A. This latter country, even when it stops supporting its classical colonial allies, never loses sight of its own imperialist objectives which are to practice in Africa what it has already done in North and South America.

The interests of Africa and those of the whole imperialist system are irreconcilable. The national and economic renaissance of Africa can be brought about only in opposition to imperialism. This renaissance must conduct a merciless struggle against neo-colonialism, which it must needs liquidate, just as it has partly done to classical colonialism.

All attempts at conciliation, every underestimation of neo-colonialism betray the cause of African liberation. Africa should not align its foreign policy with that of the western camp or that of the socialist camps. It should put into practice an effective policy of non-involvement which would mean relations with all countries, to the exclusion of none, and a fight for complete economic and political liberation, in alliance with all the forces of freedom and peace.

Our country, in seeking its political role in Africa, should tread the road to a genuine, anti-imperialist African solidarity in the spirit of Bandung, in the spirit of a vigorous struggle against the plots of the neo-colonialists. It is still possible for the Tunisian bourgeoisie to have illusions about the advantages to be gained from their foreign policy, illusions strengthened by the fact that imperialism, especially American imperialism, has no big econom interests to safeguard in Tunis. The course of development will reveal how ludicrous these illusions are.

Viewed in this light, Tunisian policy cannot be regarded as fixed. It can be modified by the pressure of the masses and by demands of national and international reality.

Granted that the Tunisian bourgeoisie with the support of the people has been able to inscribe some not unworthy pages in the struggle against classical colonialism, nevertheless its inadequacies, its prejudices, its readiness to compromise, prevent it from shining in the struggle against neo-colonialism. *It is incapacitated* in the struggle to complete the tasks of the national and democratic revolution of Tunis, and *is failing* to make an effective contribution to the revolution of the whole African continent.

◆

## ANGOLANS ARE NOT PORTUGUESE

"The African people of Angola are not Portuguese, nor do they want to be. They are a people oppressed by the Portuguese colonialists and the international monopolies, and they are fighting to gain their national independence . . . .

"The Communist Party, which has no interests other than those of the Portuguese workers, solemnly declares that it is on the side of the Angolan people in their struggle for independence and will help them by all means in its disposal.

"This stand is also in the interests of the Portuguese people. The peoples of Angola and the other colonies are not the enemies but the allies of the Portuguese people, because they are fighting the same enemies that oppress the people of Portugal.

"At this very moment the heroic struggle of the Angolan people is helping the struggle of the Portuguese people for freedom."

— From a pamphlet issued in April in Portugal by the underground *Portuguese Communist Party.*

## *Towards Working-Class Unity—*

# On the First All-African Trade Union Congress

### by B. PELA

> **The World Federation of Trade Unions considers the creation of the All-African Trade Union Federation to be a great success of the forces fighting for the unity of the trade union movement in Africa. The fight of the African trade unions for unity on the basis of anti-colonialism, against the new forms of colonial oppression, against imperialism, feudalism and reaction, inflicts heavy blows on the disruptive forces represented by imperialism and the I.C.F.T.U. These latter will not renounce their actions against unity, and must therefore be fought decisively.**
>
> **The African workers who every day understand more clearly who are their friends and who are their enemies can, if united and firmly linked with their brothers and sisters on the other continents fighting for the same aims, contribute fully to the final liquidation of colonialism and to the defeat of the new forms of colonial oppression.**
>
> **The All-African Trade Union Federation and the African workers have in this field a sincere friend — the World Federation of Trade Unions.**
>
> — From the **Draft Programme of Trade Union Action,** submitted to the Fifth World Trade Union Congress, to be held in Moscow from December 4-16, 1961.

The First All-African Trade Union Congress held at Casablanca from May 25-30, 1961, made a great contribution to the cause of working-class unity in Africa and the world by creating the All-African Trade Union Federation.

Thousands of cheering Moroccan workers, many of whom were waving banners calling for African trade union unity, greeted the delegates of more than 40 national trade union organisations from 32 African countries who attended the Congress. Almost the entire organised African working-class was represented at the Congress, with notable exceptions such as the Congo (Brazzaville), the

Central African Republic, the Republic of Madagascar, Tchad, Gabon and Cameroun, whose governments, still tied hand and foot to imperialism, prevented the workers of those countries from sending their delegates.

## THE BACKGROUND

It is impossible to grasp what a great step forward has been taken by the formation of the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) unless one understands the serious obstacles which were placed in the way of working-class unity in Africa by the imperialists and their agents in the trade unions.

There are about 15 million wage workers in Africa, that is about seven or eight per cent of the total population. This is by no means a weak force, particularly when one bears in mind that because of the migratory labour system the majority of African men have some experience of wage labour during their lives, even if only for a few months at a time. Moreover the working-class of Africa is growing rapidly and it will continue to grow. The organised working-class presents the greatest threat to the imperialists for, in the words of Jack Woddis :

> "It is above all the workers who, by their great strikes and demonstrations, have revealed to all Africans the system of imperialist exploitation under which they live, have inspired and encouraged the whole people by their determination and self-sacrifice, and have shaken up the whole imperialist edifice by their repeated blows against their oppressors. The workers' struggles have given rich experiences to the whole people . . . ."[1]

It is natural, therefore, that the imperialists have tried desperately to hold up the advance of the African working-class movement.

They have attempted to do this along two fronts, the one external and the other from within the ranks of the working-class movement itself.

The external front has been the vicious suppression of trade unions, the enactment of anti-strike laws, the introduction of pass laws and the enforcement of racial discrimination. In fact there are restrictions on the normal functioning on trade unions in almost every African country. In the light of this it is a tribute to the vigour and courage of the young African working-class that between two and three million African workers have already been organised into trade unions.

Within the ranks of the working-class movement the imperialists have tried to rob the workers of their greatest weapon — unity. Their main agent for this purpose within the last decade has been the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which was started as a breakaway from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in 1949, by the leaders of the British T.U.C. and the American A.F.L.-C.I.O. in the interests of the foreign policy of the imperialist governments of the West. Today the A.F.L.-C.I.O. has achieved a dominant position in the ICFTU and is using it to pump millions of dollars into Africa to subvert, corrupt and divide the African trade unions.[2]

In the period since November, 1959, when the Preparatory Conference for the formation of the AATUF was held in Accra, renewed efforts have been made by the imperialists to hold up the advance of working-class unity. In this the ICFTU has played a most despicable role.

Just before the Preparatory Conference was due to meet the ICFTU held an "African Regional Conference" in Lagos. In November, 1960, immediately before another AATUF Preparatory meeting at Accra, the ICFTU hurriedly called another "Regional Conference" at Tunis. However, the Tunis Conference had just the opposite effect from that intended for delegates from Aden, Zanzibar, Kenya, Nyasaland and Gambia who participated in the Tunis Conference came straight on to Accra to reaffirm their support for the AATUF.

At the same time the imperialist press in Britain and the U.S.A. was attacking the proposed Federation, smearing it with the "communist" label. Satterthwaite, formerly U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs, and now U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, "warned" against the "neutrality" of Africa's trade unions in a new Federation, which he saw as a threat to the U.S.A. John Tettegah, General Secretary of the Ghana T.U.C., made an obvious reference to the U.S. embassies when he said at Casablanca that "labour attaches in certain foreign missions were actively employed in spying on Pan-African trade unionists and employing every knavish means of either corrupting or blackmailing those found too difficult to subdue."

The result of these intrigues by the U.S. State Department and the ICFTU was that the Constituent Congress of the AATUF could not be held in May, 1960, as had been planned. The postponement allowed time for the majority of African unions to achieve unity of outlook. Developments in Algeria, Central Africa, the Congo, Angola and South Africa brought home vividly the need for united working-class action to bring about the final liquidation of the colonial system in Africa.

At the same time many genuine trade unionists came to understand during this period that their continued dependence on the ICFTU was not helping the cause of unity, but on the contrary was leading to greater splits in the trade unions. For example, in Nigeria the ICFTU was fostering the T.U.C. of Nigeria, a splinter body. In South Africa it was pouring money into the coffers of a handful of corrupt officials of the so-called Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa, a racialistic body, so weakening further the already divided trade union movement.

The climax came in the Congo with the murder of Patrice Lumumba. All over the world trade unions spoke out strongly against this dreadful crime of the Union Miniére, Tshombe, Kasavubu and Mobutu. But not the ICFTU. While many unions, including some affiliated to the ICFTU, were rightly exposing the responsibility of the General Secretary of the U.N. for Lumumba's death, the ICFTU could find nothing more urgent to do than to assure Hammarskjoeld of its "unconditional and total support." Not once did the ICFTU condemn the henchmen of imperialism. Instead it contented itself with a meaningless demand for "an international commission under U.N. auspices . . . to investigate the circumstances of the death of Lumumba."

The moment for the formation of the AATUF, and for the isolation of those who still clung on to the apron strings of ICFTU – neo-colonialism, could no longer be delayed. The AATUF Constituent Congress was convened for the end of May, 1961, under the sponsorship of the trade unions of Morocco, Ghana, Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Tunisia and the Union Générale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noir (UGTAN).

Not even the most ardent supporters of the ICFTU were able to stay away from the Congress. Tom Mboya, a member of the Executive Bureau of the ICFTU, declared shortly after the Preparatory Conference of 1959, which he did not attend, that "my position is that I believe firmly in continued affiliation to the ICFTU". Some ICFTU affiliates were openly hostile to the AATUF. Yet by May, 1961, the ICFTU's depleted African affiliates were at the Casablanca Congress, and Mboya, at their head, stated to the Congress that "we each and every one support the formation of the AATUF."

Two-and-a-half years had passed since the All-African Peoples' Conference in December, 1958, had called for the formation of an All-African Trade Union Federation. Two-and-a-half years of mass working-class action in all parts of the Continent, of victory for the independence struggle in a host of African territories, of constant struggle by the growing forces of unity against the dark forces of division, and opportunism. Two-and-a-half years which had brought about an apparent reversal of the attitude of the ICFTU and its affiliates in Africa to the formation of the AATUF.

But at the Congress itself it soon became clear that what they could not achieve beforehand, the ICFTU and its dollar-supported cronies were determined to achieve at the Congress.

## UNITY FOR WHAT?

Diallo Seydou, General Secretary of the UGTAN, in his report to the Congress on a Programme of Action, correctly stated: "Unity at any cost, without a purpose, without principles, would not stand up to any attack by our class enemies. This must be understood if the Pan-African movement is to succeed."

What, then, was to be the basis for unity in the AATUF?

Diallo Seydou himself stated seven political aims for the new Federation :

(1) the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and against international trusts ;
(2) the struggle for the independence of all African countries ;
(3) the struggle to safeguard and consolidate independence in those countries which have won their freedom ;
(4) the struggle against the infiltration of neo-colonialism into Africa ;
(5) the struggle against racial discrimination ;
(6) the struggle for the defence of democratic and trade union liberties ;
(7) the struggle against the joining by African states of non-African organisations, permitting the establishment of military bases or curtailing the liberty of African states.

The economic aims, he said, were twofold :

(1) the struggle to establish an African common market and bring into harmony the economic policy of the African states ;
(2) the struggle against the European Common Market.

In the cultural field, he declared, the working-class of Africa must revive and defend African culture, which has been stifled by colonisation. The social aim of the AATUF would be to work for Africa's riches to be exploited "in the interests of all social classes".

It is highly significant that all delegates declared their support for these basic principles and aims.

How was it possible for affiliates of the ICFTU to declare their support for the seven political "struggles" named by Diallo Seydou as the basis for unity? No doubt some of these trade unionists did so simply because they know that it is imposible to obtain support from African workers today unless one launches a strong attack on imperialism. But it would be a mistake to think that all the leaders of African trade unions affiliated to the ICFTU are just being dishonest. Nor can one ascribe dishonesty to the hundreds of thousands of African workers belonging to organisations affiliated to the ICFTU. The truth is that their own conditions of life and experiences under the colonial yoke have convinced many African trade unionists that colonialism must be rooted out of Africa. In fighting this enemy, however, some of these trade unionists have been misled by the constant stream of U.S. "cold war" propaganda, and in the search for assistance for their struggling unions they have fallen prey to the ready money of the ICFTU, whose agents enjoy the "official" or semi-official support of all colonial governments. (Even in South Africa, ICFTU men have been allowed to come in and out of the country freely.)

Their opposition to imperialism sooner or later brings the genuine elements in the African trade unions into conflict with the bosses of the ICFTU — Meany, Reuther, Becu and so on. Some recognition of this conflict is to be found in the increasing persistency with which the ICFTU has been forced in recent years to declare its support for Tunisian and Moroccan independence, to condemn the colonial war in Algeria, to oppose Federation in Central Africa, to organise a boycott of South African goods and to ask the U.N. to impose economic sanctions against the Government of South Africa. Further recognition of this growing conflict is the demand of Africans in the ICFTU for "autonomy" for their African Regional Organisation of the ICFTU. This conflict and the advancing power of the liberation movements of Africa were again reflected in the support given by the ICFTU African affiliates to the basic aims of the Federation, as outlined by Diallo Seydou.

At the same time, the way in which the ICFTU leaders try to rob these aims of their real content was seen in the speech made at the Congress by Mboya. After referring to the "subtle manoeuvres of the imperialists", he spoke of the murder of Lumumba and declared that the "imperialists triumphed — all of them from East and West." He added that in Africa "powers from East and West see a chance to come in and exploit the new pastures." Imperialism, according to Mboya, is a word to be used indiscriminately, to put the socialist countries of the East into the same category as the capitalist countries of the West.

Now Mboya knows the source of Africa's woes, for he himself told the Congress that "the masses of Africa . . . have seen and known poverty and exploitation and disease and know the methods of the colonialists and European settler racialists." Did these colonialists and racialists come from the socialist East or from the imperialist West? Was it Russia or was it Britain which took away the land from the people of Mboya's native Kenya? Was it the socialist East or was it Belgium backed by the N.A.T.O. powers of the West which supported the murderers of Lumumba? The workers of Africa know the answers to these questions, even if Mr. Mboya, the favourite of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. of the U.S.A., does not. The workers of Africa know that there is no exploiting capitalist class in the socialist countries, wishing to milk dry the newly independent states. They know that the rulers of the socialist countries are the workers and peasants who have ended exploitation for ever, and that the rulers in the West are the imperialists "looking for new pastures" to exploit the peoples of Africa.

The majority of delegates showed far superior knowledge to that of Mr. Mboya by the direct attacks which they made on "Western" imperialism, and by the heartfelt welcome which they gave to the delegates of the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, who attended the Congress. They gave a warm reception, too, to the speech of greetings delivered on behalf of the 107 million members of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

On the other hand, the delegates were able to see the hypocrisy in the speech delivered for the ICFTU by S. Nedzynski. Not once in his speech did Nedzynski attack imperialism directly, nor did he expose the role of U.S. neo-colonialism. Instead he mouthed well-worn catchwords, such as "the struggle for freedom, human dignity and equality of men" and spoke of "this continent where men have suffered so much at the hands of other men", of "colonial divisions" and "arbitrary methods of domination". At no stage did he explain the root causes of those sufferings, divisions and domination — namely the policy and aims of the imperialists. It was obvious that the kind of "freedom" which the so-called "free" trade unions want for the workers is "free" capitalist development, that is the "free" exploitation of the African peoples by the monopolies.

Because of disruption caused by some of the ICFTU affiliates at the Congress it was not possible to have a really thorough discussion of all the basic aims of the new Federation. If there had been time, certain features of the statement of aims made by Diallo Seydou and those incorporated in the Charter which was finally adopted, might have been improved.

For example, in the statement of economic aims, no specific mention was made of the pressing fight of the trade unions for the workers' economic claims against capitalist exploitation. Experience shows that it is precisely from the class struggles of the workers for higher wages, reduced working hours, guarantees against unemployment, more paid holidays, extension of social security measures and so on, that broad, united working-class action against the monopolies becomes possible and essential. The fight for the defence of the workers' immediate interests is closely linked with the united struggle against imperialism. Satisfaction of immediate demands would also be an important step on the road to social progress in Africa.

The Charter of the AATUF states the economic role of African trade unionism as being the "freeing of Africa from exploitation and inaugurating in particular the agrarian reform and industrialisation". Now precisely to reach these vital goals it is necessary for the workers to wage a constant struggle against capitalist exploitation. The daily struggles of the workers for better wages and improved conditions, besides in themselves often resulting in an immediate, though temporary, improvement in the workers' standards, are an indispensible school for the workers, in which they are able to build up their unity and consciousness for the overthrow of the system of capitalist exploitation.

It is therefore essential for the AATUF to make the struggle for immediate economic demands a more concrete and prominent part of its activities, if it is to attract the workers and to achieve real unity.

Another feature of the 'social aims' of the AATUF, as outlined by Seydou, was his reference to having "Africa's riches exploited in the interests of all social classes". Who are the indigeneous social classes of Africa? They range from the Afrikaner finance capitalists and landbarons of South Africa and the growing bourgeoisie of Ghana and Nigeria to the workers who own no property and are exploited by the capitalists, and the peasants who make up the bulk of the population. There are also considerable middle sections — intellectuals, professionals, etc. The wealth of Africa has been created by the working people. Surely it is to them that the wealth belongs and not to "all social classes" including the exploiting classes? The aims of the African working-class in this connection were more clearly and correctly stated by the Charter, which declares :

> "The workers of Africa, workmen and peasants, are engaged in an implacable struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, feudalism and reaction.
>
> "They are fighting alongside all workers of the world in their common struggle against all forms of human exploitation."

Let us then avoid ambiguity, and say that Africa's resources should be used in the interests of its working people, and not in the interests of the exploiting classes !

These points are stated merely as additions to, and clarifications of, the basic aims of the new Federation. The common aims stated by Diallo Seydou provide a real basis for unity, not merely for passive sniping at "East and West", but for a fighting alliance against imperialism and for the building of a new Africa, freed from exploitation.

## SPLITTERS AT WORK

As there was unity on the basic aims of the Federation amongst the majority of delegates, how was it possible for a split to occur at the Congress?

The split arose over two issues on which the ICFTU pinned its hopes for disrupting the Congress : the question of "autonomy" of national centres, and the question of affiliation by national centres to outside international bodies. From the word go, even though it was not called for, delegates kept bringing these matters up. It became apparent that the ICFTU, having failed to prevent the holding of the Congress, was out to ensure that the new Federation would be a very loose structure, with very little power to act, and with national centres still being tied to imperialism through continued affiliation to the ICFTU, which could then use these centres to break up the Federation. The watchwords of the speakers supporting the ICFTU were accordingly "Autonomy" and "Freedom to join other Internationals".

Nedzynski of the ICFTU called the tune by saying: "we respect autonomy". Mboya followed this with the words "we appeal to you all on the basis of autonomy". Sawyer (Congress of Industrial Organisations, Liberia) pleaded: "Let us have a Confederation, not a Federation". The observer of the Uganda T.U.C. went so far as to say: Our participation in the work of the AATUF will be subject to certain . . . limitations". Against this Diallo Seydou said: "While respecting the autonomy of national trade union policies, we believe that it is necessary to limit their powers with regard to the fundamental question for which we wish to create the Pan-African trade union organisation". The Congress split on the question. The vast majority of delegates, including a number of ICFTU affiliates, wanted a strong Federation with the utmost power to build trade union unity, to help unions in territories still under colonial rule, and to assist the fight against neocolonialism in the newly independent territories. A small minority favoured 'unlimited autonomy' of national centres.

The minority distorted the question of autonomy. In fact, working-class unity in no way denies the independence of the different national sections of the working-class or their right to make their own decisions. This independence does not impair the unity of the working-class, but, on the contrary, it fosters a spirit of true equality and respect for the interests of the workers of different nations. At the same time, it is precisely the united liberation struggle of all workers of all countries that ensures the victory of the struggle for freedom and independence in each country. Clearly, on questions such as the joint struggle against imperialism, racial discrimination and aggressive military blocs, there is no room for the "autonomy" of national centres to depart from the aims of the AATUF, yet it was precisely on these fundamental questions that the minority were demanding — in the words of Mboya — the right "to determine their own economic and social policies as well as foreign policies." The manner in which the minority raised the question showed that they had their own intentions about autonomy, hoping to use it to break up the Congress and to make the AATUF an ineffective body.

On the question of international affiliations, Tettegah, in his report on behalf of the Preparatory Secretariat, exposed the efforts of the ICFTU to prevent the holding of the Congress and make a plea for national centres to break off affiliations to international bodies. This meant, principally, the ICFTU.

At the time of the Congress, the ICFTU had affiliates in 18 African territories: Aden, Algeria, British Cameroons, Gambia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, South Africa, Tanganyika, Tunisia, Uganda and Zanzibar. In at least five of these countries the affiliated organisations are minority, splinter groups. (The concentration of ICFTU affiliates in British "spheres of influence" is largely explained by the fact that British colonial governments always passed legislation limiting political action by trade unions, spread the narrow outook of right wing British trades unionism, and encouraged the ICFTU. In French territories, on the other hand, the trade unions grew up in the orbit of the trade union centres of metropolitan France. The French C.G.T., affiliated to the WFTU, unlike the British TUC, played a tremendous part in organising the workers of those territories, and in helping them to form close associations with the national liberation parties.)

These affiliates are a coveted plum which the ICFTU does not want to "lose". Nedzynski of the ICFTU therefore made demagogic use of the slogan of internationalism, to try to prevent the Congress from placing a bar on affiliation to the ICFTU by national centres who wish to join the AATUF. It was quite astounding to hear the representatives of an organisation whose founders split the international working-class movement a short twelve years ago, declaring that the ICFTU believes in the "cherished ideal of international solidarity of the working people." Once again the delegates saw a great working-class principle robbed of its meaning by the ICFTU.

The working-class of Africa, by the very nature of things, must be consistently internationalist. There are two reasons for this.

The first is that the African working-class has come on to the historical arena at a time when economic, cultural and political relations between countries have developed to an unprecedented extent. In particular, the international working-class movement, led by the Communist and workers' Parties, has become the mightiest force in the history of mankind. It has established state power on one-third of the globe, and is rapidly winning new victories everywhere. The workers of Africa, today destroying colonialism and achieving full independence for their countries, are fulfilling their great mission in extremely favourable circumstances, because of the might of the international working-class, and above all, because of the socialist countries. The international working-class movement is accordingly the natural and indispensable ally of the working-class of Africa.

Secondly, like workers in all countries, the workers of Africa have a fundamental interest in the abolition of capitalist oppression. This unites them with the workers of all countries against the international power of capital. And this makes internationalism not only a possibility but also a necessity for the workers of Africa if they are to end imperialism and build a socialist society.

In what organisational forms should this internationalism be achieved?

At the end of the Second World War the workers of the world founded a single trade union international, the World Federation of Trade Unions. The British and American trade union leaders then split this international so that today there are two rival internationals. The aim of workers everywhere should be to heal this split and to bring into being once again a single international, uniting all the workers of the world, without exception.

Certainly this objective will not be reached by encouraging African national centres to join the ICFTU. Nor under present conditions is it practicable to expect a large number of African centres to join the WFTU, although the latter organisation is the best suited to their interests. Accordingly, at the present stage, an African central organisation, independent of existing internationals, provides the best possible form of organisation for the advance to world unity. In fact, it will be through the unity of the workers of Africa, Asia and Latin America against imperialism, and their growing links with the workers of the capitalist countries, that the reactionary, reformist leaders of the West will be isolated and defeated, and world working-class unity will be restored. The new unity then achieved will be deeper, more profound, more widespread and at a higher level than ever before in the history of the working-class movement.

The "positive neutralism" of the AATUF is not a negative policy, indicating isolation from the great issues of our day, war and peace, colonialism and freedom, disarmament and nuclear destruction. On the contrary, it is a dynamic, positive policy. Maachou of the UGTA (Algeria) put this remarkably well when he said to the Congress: "We are in favour of neutralism and we enact this neutralism by establishing relations of solidarity with all international trade union organisations and national trade union organisations in all the continents. We offer our hand to all the workers of the world for we shall fight on the same front, against the same enemy, be it called colonialism, neo-colonialism or imperialism."

That is the real content of internationalism in relation to African working-class unity.

Because of the manner in which the question was presented by the ICFTU, the choice before the delegates was, **either** let some national centres hang on to the ICFTU and so disrupt our newly-found unity, **or** support the AATUF and demand non-affiliation by national centres to international bodies. Put in this way the choice was a simple one, and the vast majority of delegates supported the views put forward by Tettegah.

The minority were given the maximum opportunity to expound their views, and Mboya was even made Chairman of the Commission set up to produce a Constitution and to reconcile the opposing views. Senior officials of the ICFTU ran around trying to influence delegates, and Irving Brown "roving ambassador" of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., spared no efforts to disrupt proceedings. Some ICFTU supporters became extremely rowdy and tried to hold up the Plenary Session of the Congress. Finally, the deadlock was broken at a meeting of heads of delegations on May 29, which decided in favour of an independent trade union body for Africa, giving national centres ten months in which to break their ties of international organisations. Twenty-one voted in favour, and only four — Tunisia, Liberia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia — against. There were three abstentions. After being defeated in the voting, Ahmed Tlili of Tunisia, a member of the ICFTU Executive Bureau, walked out.

At this stage, reactionary elements on the Commission entrusted with drawing up the Charter and Statutes of the new Federation, again tried to hold up proceedings. Mboya, the Chairman, failed to attend its meeting. Despite these manoeuvres, however, a Charter was hurriedly drafted, and was adopted, amidst tremendous applause, on May 30. Mahjoub ben Seddik of Morocco was elected President of the AATUF, John Tettegah was elected First Secretary, and other secretaries were elected from Morocco, U.A.R., Algeria, Mali, Guinea and Kenya. Significantly, Mboya and most ICFTU affiliates were absent from the Congress during the formation of the AATUF. Yet the Zanzibar and Pemba Federation of Labour announced its immediate disaffiliation from the ICFTU.

The Congress ended on a high note, with the foundation of the All-African Trade Union Federation.

## ONWARDS FROM CASABLANCA

No sooner had the Congress ended but a hue and cry was set up from the headquarters of the ICFTU. Becu, ICFTU General Secretary, made the claim that the Congress organisers had deliberately created a division by injecting the extraneous issue of international affiliation. Yet it was precisely the ICFTU supporters who had insisted on debating this question because they wanted to remain tied to dollar imperialism. Mboya complained about the composition of the steering committee of the Congress. Yet by failing to attend the Commission, of which he was Chairman, he had all but sabotaged its work ! Borha of the T.U.C. of Nigeria claimed that the Congress was a complete failure, and that the decisions reached represented the opinion of Ghana, Guinea and the U.A.R. alone. Yet all but the 12 ICFTU unions which absented themselves from the last session had unanimously acclaimed the Charter of the AATUF !

Lies were followed by action. Tlili violently attacked the creation of the AATUF and announced his determination to set up another "All-African" organisation. In association with the ICFTU leadership, and together with trade unionists from Liberia, Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, and with Cissé Alioune of Senegal, Tlili has announced an "All-African" trade union meeting in Dakar in August. The results of this meeting are not known at the time of writing.

By such actions, before, during and after the Congress, the ICFTU has exposed its real designs, and has educated hundreds of thousands of African workers as to the dangerous splitting activities of the reformist ICFTU leaders in Africa.

In this new situation decisive action by the forces of unity is needed. Priority must be given to raising the political consciousness of the African working-class. This will best be done by spreading an understanding of Marxism-Leninism and by the building of strong Marxist-Leninist Parties throughout the Continent. These parties, because they are based on the most advanced, revolutionary theory and because they are parties of the working-class, can lead the mass working-class movement to victory.

In the mass trade union movement itself, a number of immediate tasks present themselves:

> First: the activities of the disrupters must be exposed at every opportunity. They must be isolated and totally defeated.
>
> Second: the AATUF must be built up into an effective force in every African country, basing its strength on the organised masses of workers.
>
> Third: the AATUF must daily build up its connections with the workers of all countries — both socialist and capitalist — in the struggle against the common enemy: the imperialist monopolies.

The workers of Africa are marching confidently along the road to unity. They will reach their destination all the more rapidly as they cement their links with the international working-class, and with the general anti-imperialist movement of the peoples of the world. So, too, they will continue to bring nearer the realisation of the cherished aim inscribed on the banner of the international working-class movement over 100 years ago by Marx and Engels: "Workers of all lands, Unite!"

1. *Africa — The Roots of Revolt*, London: 1960, pp.254-5.
2. These methods were described in an article by A. Lerumo in The African Communist, No. 3, 1960.

(August, 1961)

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## THE ESSENCE OF COLONIALISM

The essence of the colonial system lies in the subjection of the economy of the colonial country to the requirements of the economy of the imperialist country.

— R. PALME DUTT, *Crisis of Britain and the British Empire.*

## *Marxist Education Series: No. 3*

# Imperialism—The Last Stage of Capitalism

*By Jalang Kwena*

Our last study closed with the end of the era of free capitalist competition. This one will deal with imperialism, the highest and last stage in the development of the capitalist mode of production.

The transition from pre-monopoly capitalism to imperialism (monopoly capitalism) took place in the last third of the nineteenth century, and imperialism finally took shape at the beginning of the twentieth century. By then the founders of scientific socialism, Karl Marx and Frederic Engels had already completed their basic works. It was left to their most brilliant follower, the outstanding leader of the international working class V. I. Lenin, to analyse the fundamental nature of modern imperialism, in his classic book "Imperialism". He defined the five fundamental features of imperialism as follows :

- "Concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play the decisive role in economic life ;
- "The merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the creation, on the basis of this 'finance capital' of a financial oligarchy ;
- "The export of capital, as distinguished from the export of commodities, acquires exceptional importance ;
- "The formation of international monopolist combines which share the world among themselves ; and
- "The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers."

This stage was reached through a long and complex process of economic and political development. It led to great scientific and technical progress, but was marked by bitter and bloody struggles—between rival capitalist groups, between capitalists and the working class, between capitalist nations, and between predatory capitalist powers and the peoples of pre-capitalist societies whom they sought to conquer. There were repeated economic crises of "over-production", in which the bigger and stronger enterprises eliminated smaller and weaker ones. Industrial and commercial mergers were formed in which wealth and power concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. There were repeated wars of plunder and conquest. There were grim working class struggles for better working conditions and living standards, for political rights and power. There was a constant need for improved means and methods of production.

Huge, well-equipped and efficiently-run industries of all kinds were built up by the skill and hard work of the workers and technicians—engineering, metallurgical, chemical, electrical, mining, textile, and other giants of industry. In all major capitalist countries highly-developed networks and systems of transport and communication were developed. The steam engine was supplanted as a source of industrial energy by motors powered by petroleum and electricity. The giant undertakings, controlling a disproportionate share of their national economies, struggled by all the vast means in their power, to destroy their rivals and competitors on a national and international scale—or if they could not, to come to terms with them in an agreement to dictate and control the prices of commodities, through international monopolies, syndicates, trusts and cartels. Let us briefly define these :

A *monopoly* is a very large individual enterprise—or an association of alliance of enterprises—which has concentrated in its hands the production and marketing of a considerable, at times a preponderant, share in one or several branches of the economy. "It is characterised by enormous economic power and the important role it plays in the given field of production and trade. This gives it a dominant position, enabling it to fix monopoly prices and thereby to obtain high monopoly profits."[1] Monopolies operate both on national and international fields.

A *cartel* is "an agreement between several large capitalist enterprises, in which the participants divide the markets among themselves, decide the quantity of goods to be produced, and fix prices, conditions of sale, dates of payment, etc.[2]

A *syndicate* differs from a cartel in that the enterprises belonging to it lose their commercial independence. The sale of goods and sometimes the purchase of raw materials as well, is effected through a common office. In a *trust the* enterprises completely lose their independence. The trust is in charge of the entire production, sale of goods and finance of the previously independent enterprises.

## THE ESSENCE OF IMPERIALISM

> "The replacement of free competition by monopoly is the basic economic feature, the essence, of imperialism."
> —Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

Imperialism does away with *free* economic competition. But monopoly does not eliminate competition, on the contrary, it intensifies it and makes it keener and more destructive. The struggle continues between monopolies and non-monopoly enterprises; between the different monopoly concerns and even between rival groups within a monopoly itself. The export of capital leads to a sharpening of competition on the world market. The monopolies apportion spheres of influence on a world scale. International Monopolies are formed. International monopoly agreements cover all fields of industrial production and activity including the making and sale of armaments. Some important present day monopolies are: —

In *Armaments*: Armstrong Vickers (Britain), Krupp (West Germany), Schneider-Creusot (France) and Bofors (Sweden).

In *Oil*: Standard Oil (U.S.A.), Royal Dutch Shell (largely British).

In *Coal and Steel*: United States Steel Corporation and Bethlehem Steel Corporation (U.S.A.), Iron and Steel Corporation (Britain), European Coal and Steel Union (France, Italy, West Germany, Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg).

In *Electrical Equipment*: General Electric Company (Germany), General Electrical Corporation (U.S.A.).

In the *Chemical Industry*: Du Pont's de Nemours and Co. (U.S.A.); Imperial Chemical Industries (Britain), the Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation (U.S.A.) and the I.G. Farben Chemical Trust of Germany. There are also many other monopolistic enterprises such as General Motors, Lever Brothers, etc.

In South Africa the biggest monopoly is the Chamber of Mines whose membership in 1954 comprised 63 gold mining companies,

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1. "Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism", a manual issued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

2. The same.

24 coal mining companies and 14 financial corporations. The Chamber is itself dominated by vast concerns such as Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation, which spreads its tentacles all over Southern and Central Africa, and the General Mining Corporation. They are closely linked with British and American financial and imperialist interests. The Chamber organises the recruitment and sharing out of cheap African labour from all over the continent, and operates a vicious "maximum average wage" agreement designed to keep African rates of pay at starvation level.

Apart from the mining of gold, coal and other minerals, and their financial institutions, members of the Chamber own many other business and industrial enterprises, as well as printing and newspaper establishments throughout the Republic of South Africa, South-West Africa and the Central African Federation.

"The gold mining members of the Chamber produced 12,699,000 fine ounces of gold at a realised value of £157,997,000 or about 96 per cent. of the Union's gold production. The coal mining members produced 27,888,000 tons of coal valued at the pithead at £14,577,000 (10/5 per ton), or over 75 per cent., by weight of the country's coal output. Thirteen gold mines, members of the Chamber, were producing Uranium in March, 1955, and 13 others had been authorised by the Atomic Energy Board to produce Uranium."[3]

## MONOPOLIES IN THE UNITED STATES

A clear picture of monopolies today may be seen in the United States. America prides itself on being a country of "free private enterprise." But in reality the whole economy of the country is dominated and controlled by some 400 banker-industrialists. Some of these are : —

The *J. P. Morgan* monopoly, which has interests in and controls 32 industrial corporations, 14 railway systems, 14 utility corporations, 5 banks and 3 insurance companies.

The *John D. Rockefeller* group, which owns 6 oil companies, one paper company, one bank and two insurance companies, which in turn control a huge industrial empire.

Messrs. *Kuhn, Loeb & Co.*, the railway kings whose representatives sit on the boards of directors of many other industrial corporations and financial institutions.

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[3] Official South African Year Book No. 28.

The *Andrew Mellon* monopoly, the aluminium magnates who also have interests in oil, chemical, coal, steel, glass, gas and electricity.

The *E.I. du Pont* interests, the big producers of industrial chemicals, holder of the controlling interests in the General Motors Corporation, the United States Rubber Co. and two financial corporations.

The assets of the undertakings and enterprises owned and controlled by these five millionaire groups run into scores of billions of pounds. Through their fabulous riches they dominate the whole social life in America. Together they own practically everything and control every institution in that country, including the State itself and almost all sources of information and organs of propaganda.

## FINANCE CAPITAL

As we have seen from Lenin's definition the merging of bank capital with industrial capital created finance capital which developed into a financial oligarchy. Financial capital is

> "The capital of banking and industrial monopolies which has became knit together into one. The epoch of imperialism is the epoch of finance capital. In every capitalist country a small handful of the biggest bankers and industrial monopolists hold in their grasp all the vitally important branches of the economy and dispose of the overwhelming bulk of social wealth. Management by capitalist monopolies inevitably becomes the rule of a finance oligarchy (the rule of the few). Imperialism is marked by the omnipotence of the monopoly trusts and syndicates, the banks and the finance oligarchy in the developed capitalist countries."[4]

In banking, just as in industry, concentration led to monopoly. The banks started as small and humble institutions serving as intermediaries for payments. But in due course they developed and became mighty and all-important institutions having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small owners and also the large part of the means of production and the resources of raw materials.

As capitalism developed the activity of the banks as traders in capital became more extensive. Accumulation of capital and concentration of production in industry led to concentration in the

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"Political Economy" a text book issued by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

banks of enormous amounts of spare money seeking profitable investments. The share of banks operating on a large scale grew steadily. By the purchasing of shares, granting of credits, the largest banks subjected the smaller ones to themselves. Monopoly unions of banks were formed which became in fact branches of the big ones. Through a widespread network of branches the big banks gathered together in their safes the resources of a great number of enterprises. Having acquired a monopoly position, the big banks, concluded agreements among themselves on the division of spheres of influence.

The change of the banks from their original humble position to their present status of economic and political dominance is a fundamental process in the growth of capitalism to imperialism. The banks became partners in industry and big industrialists penetrated into banking business by investing in them. The usual form in which the banks invested money in industry was through the purchase of shares. They also assisted in the formation of joint-stock companies. The public sale and purchase of shares of joint-stock companies was largely conducted through the banks.

Apart from the banks, shares of joint-stock companies are usually offered for public subscription at *stock exchanges*. Here, through their brokers, people of different economic levels buy shares in the hope of making money by so doing. But, the majority of shareholders have no say in the policy making and administration of the affairs of the companies cncerned. Only the rich who are able to buy big blocks of shares have a say. As rich institutions, banks were able to buy a large quantity of shares, and, as rich individuals, industrialists were able to purchase important blocks of shares. In this way the interests of the banks and that of the industrialists became identified ; the monopoly banking capital and the monopoly industrial capital coalesced and gave rise to finance capital. The "big boys" who control large industrial enterprises and banks are, at the same time, industrialists and bankers.

Only those who can afford to buy big blocks of shares in a capitalist company have a voice in the affairs and management of that company. A small man with his few shares counts for very little indeed. The say belongs to those who possess blocks of shares which enable them to cast substantial votes at members' meetings. It is not necessarily the majority of shares of a company which determines policies. It is true that the customary controlling block of shares consist of 51 per cent. of the shares. However, a controlling block of shares may consist of between 10 and 20 per cent. of the total shares of a company.

Through their financing institutions—banks, insurance companies and stock exchanges—the capitalists have worked themselves into positions of economic advantage. They buy controlling shares in one company which in turn buys controlling shares in another company and so on. As a result these financial magnates have at their disposal financial resources which by far exceed those of their own company. This system provides them with unlimited financial resources for further investment.

In pre-monopoly capitalism the export of goods was one of the main features of foreign trade. Under imperialism the export of *capital* became one of the main characteristic features. Capital is chiefly exported to less developed or under-developed countries such as colonies and dependencies. There, land, raw materials and labour are cheap and plentiful and profits are high. Export of capital to foreign countries takes various forms.

Often special companies are formed in imperialist countries. Money is raised by selling shares and used to establish mines, plantations, etc. in areas which are undeveloped economically. The natural resources and the labour are provided by the colonial country, but all the wealth and profits are sent abroad. Such for example were the De Beers and other mining ventures floated by the master-imperialist Cecil Rhodes, culminating in the "British South Africa Company" which for many years actually owned and administered Southern Rhodesia. Another example is the Belgian *Union Miniere* operating in Katanga.

Another method is the making of loans to colonial and dependent governments or local authorities. The imperialists not only draw substantial interest on such loans, but also see to it that they are used to assist foreign interests, to build roads, railways, ports, etc., which facilitate their operations.

"Concessions" are sought by imperialist financiers to 'develop' the communications, mineral resources or other wealth of a territory. Often chiefs or local authorities are bribed and misled into selling the natural heritage of their people for a trifling sum.

All imperialist countries have invested hundreds of millions of pounds in colonial and semi-colonial countries. The investments of the United States in the colonies and dependent countries are said to exceed the combined investments and credits of all other capitalist countries. The riches in the form of profits, dividends and raw materials pour into the United States every year from the Middle East, South America, Asia and Africa.

## CONQUEST OF TERRITORIES

In their search for markets and areas of investment, capitalist nations embarked on an aggressive policy of territorial conquest and colonisation. The methods in furtherance of this policy differed considerably, depending on the nature of the resistance offered by those whom the colonisers intended colonising. Sometimes they took the form of open wars, at times that of "punitive" military expeditions, and at other times they took the form of diplomatic blackmail, bribery and coercion. The degree of domination and oppression that followed conquest, the future status of the subjugated people largely depended on the outcome of their struggle, the terms of surrender and the natural resources of the country concerned. Some countries became colonies or semi-colonies, others "protectorates" or "dependencies."

> "The history of colonial policy is an unbroken chain of wars of conquest and punitive expeditions against the enslaved peoples, and also of bloody clashes between the countries possessing colonies."[5]

A colony is a country which has been deprived of independence and has become a possession of another country. A semi-colony is an economically under-developed country which is an object of colonial exploitation of other countries and is economically and politically dependent on those countries but retains formal independence.

To capitalist nations, colonies and dependencies are regarded and used merely as sources of raw materials, reservoirs of cheap labour, markets and areas for capital investment. The peoples of these territories are robbed and exploited through the low prices paid for raw materials and their products, and the exorbitant prices they have to pay for the finished goods. In spite of statements to the contrary capitalist countries take out infinitely more from the colonies and dependencies than they put into them.

The result of the policy of territorial conquest was that by the second half of the nineteenth century the continents of Asia, South America and Africa had more or less been divided among the various capitalist powers. This meant that any further territorial division after this period involved a bitter struggle between its "owner" and the new would-be conqueror.

In the race of the "advanced" West European countries to acquire colonies, some—like Germany—had been left behind because of their comparatively less-developed economies. But their rate of capitalist development, based on the latest techniques, soon caught up with and outstripped that of the pioneer imperialist countries, like Britain and France, which had already grabbed the richest colonies. The newcomers demanded that they too should have a share in the "right" to rob colonial slaves. This led to serious conflict between the great groups of giant imperialist powers which exploded into an armed clash on a world scale in 1914.

Apart from numerous wars between conquering nations and those sought for conquest, the imperialists have already plunged mankind into two terrible world wars within a space of 25 years. The law of uneven development which enables countries to proceed "by leaps and bounds" causes sharp contradictions between country and country and leads to wars for the redivision of the world.

Imperialism condemns the subject countries to a state of economic backwardness. Their resources are never properly ascertained and tapped. Hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples are doomed to a life of unheard of suffering and repression, a state of rightlessness, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. While all previous societies and systems—because of their lopsided nature and inherent defects—have always failed to make full and proper use of the natural resources, the knowledge and labour of man, imperialism accentuates this weakness and evil.

The imperialist policy of keeping the colonies and colonial peoples in a state of backwardness and perpetual ignorance and hunger has led to innumerable bitter and relentless struggles for freedom and national independence. These struggles took various forms—demonstrations, strikes, peasant revolts, armed insurrections, and were waged ceaselessly for generations.

The first world war shook the whole fabric of imperialism to its foundations and gravely weakened it. It culminated in a great historical event—the great Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, which destroyed the Tsarist empire, and led to the emergence of a

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5. " Political Economy'"—Page 296.

new, socialist state of workers and peasants, a powerful ally for all oppressed and colonial people, and a tremendous inspiration for them in their struggles for freedom and national independence. With the defeat, under the blows of the Soviet armies, of Nazi German imperialism in the second world war, the process begun in 1917 was mightily advanced. The entire colonial system of western imperialism began rapidly to disintegrate and collapse before the powerful impact of national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The 600 million Chinese people threw off the U.S.-dominated puppet regime of Chiang Kai-Shek and began to build a new life. In India, Burma and one Asian country after another, the imperialists were forced to give way and concede independence.

The process spread to Africa. Today we are in the midst of the African Revolution. In one country after another the people have stood up to demand—and win—their right to govern themselves, decide their own destiny, and establish independent African States. And the process still goes on.

Though many former colonies and dependencies in Asia and Africa have achieved political independence they are still economically dependent. Imperialists and colonialists still control vast and vital sectors of these countries' national economies. As long as this situation obtains their independence is not properly founded and secured. And those of them which fail to correct this grave defect will eventually slip back to a state of dependency. For national independence to be well founded a country must control its own basic industry. It must possess such resources as *electric power establishments*, a *chemical industry*, and an *engineering industry*. It must have machines to produce machines and for making goods for consumption ; and it must have adequate and efficient *transport* and *communication* systems.

## THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

As it is primarily interested in profits, and because the production of an abundance of goods would adversely affect the rate of profits, imperialism deliberately and actively retards the growth of the productive forces and technological progress. As a result millions of people are always unemployed. However, the growth of the productive forces never comes to a standstill. The unending competition defeats and, to a certain extent, frustrates the efforts of monopolies in this connection.

As we have seen already, capitalism is a system of contradictions and recurring economic crises. Apart from these and in addition to them, however, capitalism in its imperialist stage—has entered its general crisis, the blow that spells its final doom. This began with the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 when the world split into two social systems. The crisis deepened and spread with the rise of new socialist states in Europe and Asia at the end of the second world war, and the weakening of imperialism through the collapse of the colonial system, and the rise of independent states in Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

The shrinkage in the imperialist system further sharpened and accentuated the contradictions of the system. Markets and areas of investment were lost, production suffered. The imperialists are faced with problems arising from these difficulties, problems which they are incapable of solving : loss of export markets and areas for investment, under-capacity production, unemployment, falling standards of living, etc.

## POLITICAL DOMINATION

Up to this point we have mainly dealt with economic aspects of imperialism. Now let us look into some of its political policies and activities. All capitalist political parties represent the economic and political interests of the capitalist class. The apparent differences in their policies merely reflect different sectional interests within the class. Capitalist politicians and cabinet ministers are usually owners, directors or sons of owners and directors of industrial or commercial enterprises, or of big land and property owners.

In South Africa the political influence and power of the ruling class—the Chamber of Mines, the rich big farmers and the banker-industrialists—is enormous indeed. Particularly that of the obscurantist semi-feudal farmers who are the mainstay of the reactionary and inhuman apartheid policies of the Verwoerd Government. They have set their faces against any social, economic and political advancement of the non-whites in general and of the African people in particular.

Because of the tremendous economic and political power which they possess, monopolies exercise undue and dangerous influence over governments and government policies. Though they talk of democracy and democratic institutions, in actual fact these mean the rule of the minority, the rich, and its exercise of power over the majority, through the bourgeois state—the police force, the army and the law courts. The monopolies always have the machinery of the capitalist state at their disposal. This is the position even in countries where the people have the vote. The people may have the vote for the representative institutions: parliament, provincial institutions and the municipalities, but it is not easy for the people themselves to get into these institutions as entry into them is always hemmed in by many economic and financial barriers. These barriers reduce the legal and constitutional rights laid down in the franchise laws to a farce. In the colonies the vote was and still is the right of the master race. Even where the franchise was not supposed to be based on race or colour it was confined to the master race and a few members of the oppressed people.

Notwithstanding the economic and financial barriers and restrictions mentioned above, however, the working class and their political parties, through experience and political maturity, began to learn how to overcome the obstacles and to use these legislative and governing institutions. The monopolies saw in this growing political strength of the working class a mortal threat to their own power and interests. Still holding the state machine in their hand they discarded the known methods of bourgeois democracy, instituted and resorted to methods and measures of repression. One of these is fascism, an open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary and aggressive elements of finance capital.

"Fascism means the brutal suppression of workers' and peasants' movements, savage reprisals against proletarian and other democratic parties and social organisations, the militarisation of the country, and the inauguration of a policy of military adventure... Fascism sets itself the aim, internally, of smashing the organisations of the working class and crushing all progressive forces, and, externally, of preparing and launching a war of conquest for domination of the world."[6]

The correctness of the above statement and every one of the propositions contained in it are borne out by the events of the decade that preceded the second world war. We still remember the predatory activities of the Italian, Japanese and German fascist Governments. The Japanese militarists invaded China and mercilessly killed hundreds of thousands of Chinese people and plundered the country. Italian fascists under the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, massacred thousands of poorly armed and poorly clad

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**6. " Political Economy"—Page 349.**

Ethiopian people. The hordes of Hitlerite Germany over-ran Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and, later Belgium, Holland, France and Greece, and eventually plunged the whole world into a costly and most destructive war. All these fascist states destroyed workers and progressive organisations in their countries.

Sharpening contradictions in the era of imperialism lead the bourgeoisie or ruling class to take reactionary measures against the workers and the people generally, such as the cutting of wages and lowering of living standards and depriving the people of their democratic rights. These actions in turn evoke stubborn resistance on the part of the working class which at times leads to social upheavals and revolutions.

## BIRTH OF A NEW ORDER

Let us recall the Marxist philosophical proposition that—

> "No social order is destroyed until all the productive forces for which it gives scope have been developed : new and higher production relations cannot appear until the material conditions for their existence have ripened within the womb of the old social order."

Imperialism, or monopoly capitalism, therefore, is the beginning of its transition to the new and higher social order. Concentration of production, which gives rise to monopoly—the huge enterprises, large number of workers in these enterprises, the social character of production and centralised control—is a basis for and a great step forward towards the socialisation of the means of production.

In our next study we shall deal with the new social order

SOCIALISM.

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# After Forty Years

## AN IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY FOR AFRICA

*By A. Lerumo*

JULY 29, 1961, was a noteworthy date, not only for the workers of South Africa, but also for all African patriots and revolutionaries, for it marked the fortieth anniversary of the first Communist Party in our Continent—the Communist Party of South Africa. To mark the occasion, the Education Department of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party has compiled a pamphlet, "After Forty Years." This does not set out to present a complete history of the C.P.S.A., but is a brief review and outline, intended to provide members and other interested people with a basis for discussion of the many rich and fruitful lessons of the history of the Party during its existence, from July 1921 until June 1950, when it was dissolved.

During the course of its existence, the review points out in the "Introduction," the Party made a profound political and ideological impact on the oppressed people and working class of the country, in the face of the most formidable difficulties. These difficulties consisted not only in the rigorous persecution to which the Party was subjected from its inception, by the imperialist ruling classes of the country, but also in the immense complexity inherent in the historical conditions which it encountered in its work.

The Communist Party was originally an offspring of the Left wing of the White Labour movement. In its early years it was considerably influenced by the confused non-Marxist approaches and misconceptions prevailing in the S.A. Labour Party and the trade unions, similar to those of the British counterparts of these organisations. Many of its members also suffered from the evil disease of White Chauvinism which is endemic among South African Whites, including the working class.

Yet in spite of these formidable difficulties and obstacles, the Party had already within a matter of one generation of its existence brought about profound changes in thinking, political outlook, demands, forms of organisation and methods of struggle, of the oppressed and exploited people of this country.

Hated, slandered and persecuted by the ruling classes, the Party grew to become the outstanding champion of the oppressed and working people, their fearless leader in every struggle against exploitation and national oppression, whose dynamic tradition is carried forward today, under new conditions, by the South African Communist Party.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS — THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Like the British Labour Party, the S.A. Labour Party arose originally mainly as a political wing of the Trade Union Movement. This Trade Union movement had developed in the early years of the 20th century, following the rush of British and other European workers to the diamond fields and gold mines. It was many years before the African workers entered the path of Trade Unionism; in those days the Unions were confined to white workers.

Under capitalism, some categories of skilled workers often try to maintain a "scarcity" value for their labour power by restricting entry to these jobs, using such methods as stiff conditions of apprenticeship and the exclusion of certain categories of workers (e.g. women) into their trades. In a country like South Africa, where the great mass of unskilled workers who desire to acquire skills are members of a different national group, with different physical characteristics, different cultural backgrounds, and different languages, it is all to easy for this exclusiveness to acquire the character of racial hostility and Chauvinism. Combined with a monopoly of the franchise and other political rights, this selfish race exclusiveness has undermined feelings of class solidarity and internationalism among the White workers and made them allies of the predatory White imperialists in their ruthless robbery and oppression of the non-White masses.

Yet the White Labour movement had another side to it, a side of militant revolutionary socialism—the mortal enemy of all ideas and practices of racial exclusiveness, hatred and oppression. Some of the leaders of the Labour Party were to prove themselves true internationalists, in word and deed.

Prior to the outbreak of the first world war, the various socialist and workers' parties of the world had, in the famous Basle resolution of the Second International, pledged themselves to oppose the war and, should it nevertheless break out, to fight for the downfall each of its own capitalist government. When the war broke out in 1914 this solemn pledge was, as is well known, broken by the Social-Democratic Parties of all the great powers with the notable exception of the Russian Bolshevik Party. One of the few parties of the Second International to stand firm by the Basle Resolution was the South African Labour Party, which had been formed in 1909. Led by two outstanding working class fighters, W. H. Andrews, who was then Chairman of the Party and head of its Parliamentary caucus, and D. Ivon Jones, who was Secretary of the Party, the S.A.L.P. denounced the war as "a war which can only benefit the international arms manufacturers' ring and other enemies of the working class, and appeals to the workers of the world to organise and refrain from participating in this unjust war."

This stand of the Executive was endorsed by a special Conference of the Party in December, 1914, but the right wing element in the party organised against the decision, whipped up patriotic fervour amongst the workers and party members, and succeeded at a special conference in August 1915 in carrying a resolution in favour of supporting the war. The Right wing led by Cresswell seized control of the party, and in a short time all the leftists and militant internationalists had either been expelled or forced to resign rather than sign a pledge to support the war. The Labour Party lost its three leading officials and seven other members of its Executive.

The Left leaders at first tried hard to fight within the ranks of the Labour Party for a return to the earlier policy. A weekly newspaper, *The International* was established on September 10th, 1915, under the editorship of D. I. Jones. But the "Internationalists" were hounded by the Labour Party leadership, and on September 22nd, 1915, together with the "War on War League", a militant anti-war Socialist body headed by S. P. Bunting, they decided to sever all connections with the Labour Party and to found the International Socialist League. Andrews was elected Chairman, Jones Secretary and Bunting a member of the Executive Committee. Eight branches of the Labour Party came over to the League.

The I.S.L. warmly welcomed the March 1917 Revolution in Russia. Jones wrote in "The International" that though a bourgeois revolution, "coming when the night of capitalism is fast spent it cannot be a repetition of previous revolutions. It is the half-way house to the Socialist revolution."

This brilliant prevision was fully borne out seven months later, with the triumph of Soviet power inspired by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of V. I. Lenin. This victory was hailed (again by Jones) as "the most glorious revolution of all time." "We have to prepare the workers against any attempt to mobilise them against their Russian comrades," he wrote.

## ADVANCING ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Although they left the Labour Party on a matter of principle, the majority of the members of the I.S.L. still suffered from the traditional South African white chauvinistic outlook and racial prejudice in their relations with the non-white population, in the same way as members of their former party. However, with the break from the Labour Party, the more far sighted leaders of the I.S.L., particularly Jones and Bunting, began a fundamental re-examination of the major problems of the country from the enlightened stand-point of Marxist science.

Ivon Jones was, indeed, a fine Marxist. On many important questions his analyses came very close to those of Lenin, whose works he had never read. Time and again he reverted to the essential question of South Africa—white imperialism.

"Slaves to a higher oligarchy, the white workers of South Africa themselves batten on a lower, slave class, the native races" he wrote in a deeply penetrative article (December 1915). "Thus has the South African labour movement grown, more intolerant towards the native slaves than any other working class in the world, and consequently more parasitical than any other. To such a movement, talk of the international unity of the working class could never arouse sincere response."

The I.S.L. did indeed make serious and not unsuccessful efforts to win non-white support and to establish friendly relations with the African National Congress, the African Peoples' Organisation, and other liberationist bodies. Some of its members threw themselves wholeheartedly into the struggles of the African workers and in the task of organising them. As early as 1917, they formed a trade union for African workers, a kind of general workers' union, called the Industrial Workers of Africa.

But the main direction of the work of the I.S.L. continued to lie amongst the white "aristocracy of labour"; its main preoccupation was with their problems.

*In* 1921 *the I.S.L. took the initiative in convening a unity conference of all Socialist organisations to discuss their merging into a single Communist Party and affiliating to the Communist Inter-*

*national. Full agreement was reached and the inaugural Congress of the Communist Party was duly held in the Cape Town City Hall on July 29th,* 1921. *D. L. Dryburgh, a Cape Communist, presided, and Andrews was Secretary of the Congress. In his speech, Andrews urged that all workers should join their Unions. On the other hand, the Communist Party did not want everyone and anyone to join it but "only those willing to fight alongside of us no matter what the odds or difficulties may be. We want quality, not quantity. Mass action will come afterwards."*

## THE 1922 STRIKE

The young Party which was destined to play so notable a part in the history of our country, was almost immediately plunged into a furious storm of activity and crisis, the 1922 strike, which newspaper writers of the time called the 'Red Revolt'. Indeed, at the height of the strike and the armed clashes between military groups and workers' commandos, the capitalist press had no hesitation in describing the events as a "Bolshevist Revolution".

These sensational reports were of course greatly exaggerated, but it is nevertheless true that the young C.P.S.A. did play an important part in the strike.

In fact, the strike broke out as a trade union dispute which presented a serious political problem to the Communists. The issue was a plan by the employers to change the ratio of White and African workers in favour of the Africans, and to introduce non-Whites into certain categories of semi-skilled jobs, at lower pay than union rates. On the other hand, this was a threat to hard-won living standards of the workers. On the other, the workers' struggle took the form of a fight to preserve a racial monopoly of good jobs. The Party decided that it could not stand aside from the workers' struggle, but should try to guide it in a progressive direction.

When the strike broke out the Party offered its assistance to the strike committee in a public manifesto which declared that "essentially this is a fight against the rule of the capitalist class." (But it did add that "our only permanent allies are our fellow workers irrespective of race or colour"). Andrews, as a leading trade unionist and the real father of the South African labour movement, played a most important role in the councils of the strike leaders throughout, and many other Communists fought heroically in the vanguard of the workers' struggle.

The strike which developed into a bitter armed clash between the White workers and the state, lasted two months. At the beginning the strike was led by the South African Industrial Federation through a joint strike committee, but in the course of it the leadership passed to the Council of Action composed of militant trade unionists, including members of the Party such as Comrades Spendriff and Fisher, who were killed in the fight at Fordsburg; Lewis, Hull and Long sentenced to death for their part in the workers' armed resistance, who marched bravely to the gallows singing the Red Flag; and Shaw and Wordingham.

During the strike the Party was faced with the most formidable tasks. It had not only to give sound leadership to the workers in their struggles against the employers, the Chamber of Mines, and to direct defence operations. It had also to conduct continuous propaganda amongst the strikers themselves, who were of the most heterogeneous character, and many of whom were deeply infected with reactionary anti-African ideas, to prevent the strike taking on an anti-African character, to stop the strikers from attacking innocent Africants, to prevent anti-African incidents from spreading, and to intensify propaganda for the unity and identity of interests of all workers, white and black.

*If 1922 was the high water mark of white labour in South Africa, it was also its greatest and decisive defeat as a force independent of the bourgeoisie. As the more far sighted of the I.S.L. leaders had foreseen, there was no sort of future for a labour movement on this sort of parasitical basis. From 1922 onwards, the purely "white" labour movement in this country was transformed, step by step, into an emasculated adjunct of the boss class, exchanging their independence for concessions and privileges, the price of their support for white imperialism in its brutal oppression and exploitation of the African people.*

Does this mean, asks the pamphlet, that it is a hopeless task to try to win the White workers for socialism; that they should be abandoned to the capitalist politicians and theoreticians of apartheid and White supremacy? Certainly not. The long-term interests of the White workers lie together with those of their non-White fellow-workers in the struggle for a new society which will put an end to race divisions and establish a true democracy, based on equality, as the only basis for the classless socialist society of the future. And it is the duty of Communists ceaselessly to educate the White workers in these truths. But this is a long and difficult task;

the emancipation of non-White South Africa cannot wait upon its accomplishment. Indeed it may be more truly said that the enlightenment of the Whites in our country can and will be accomplished, in the first place, by the irresistible might of the militant democratic movement of the African people and its allies. The primary task of Marxists in this country is to aid with all their power the sound and rapid development of this movement. This was the principal lesson of the 1922 strike and its consequences; and there were many in the ranks of the Communist Party who saw this clearly.

Nevertheless, it was not easy for the Party at that time to overcome the heritage of its origin within the White labour movement, and a sharp struggle had to be fought for some years by those who demanded a break with this past and a firm orientation towards the masses of African workers. An earnest effort was made to get non-Whites into the Party. Thibedi, and other comrades now set about it energetically, organising and recruiting Africans. The job was well done, and by 1927 the racial composition of the Party had changed radically. Serious attention was given to organising trade union activities, night schools and other educational activities amongst the African workers, and as a result many of the best elements of the African working class were attracted into the ranks of the Party. Those who joined the Party at this time included men such as *Albert Nzula,* the first African to become general secretary of the Party, *Gana Makabeni,* well-known and respected in the African trade union movement for many years, *E. T. Mofutsanyana,* later Editor of *Inkululeko, Johannes Nkosi,* African hero and martyr who was murdered by the police, *J. B. Marks,* subsequently President of the African Mine Workers' Union, the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions and the African National Congress (Transvaal), and *Moses M. Kotane,* General Secretary of the Party from 1939 to 1950.

## TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

Under the leadership of Clements Kadalie, the I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) had begun its spectacular career of organising African workers. Members of the International Socialist League at Cape Town had helped them at its inception and the Party members rendered invaluable assistance to the I.C.U.

Despite this understanding and co-operation between the Party and the I.C.U., Communists and other militant workers inside the organisation were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with certain aspects of the Kadalie leadership. They demanded a militant policy of struggle, a change in the internal organisation of the I.C.U. on a proper industrial basis, that the finances of the organisation should be based on a sound basis, and that the dictatorial powers of Kadalie and some provincial officials should be curbed. In addition to these internal differences, there were sinister outside influences being brought to bear on the Kadalie leadership. The Government, the European liberals in the Joint Councils, the International Federation of Trade Unions and other people, sought to drive a wedge between the Communists and the other leaders of the I.C.U. They pretended to see in the organisation "a powerful inflence for good, if only those extremists and Communists who were leading the organisation astray could be eliminated." Kadalie succumbed to the flatteries of his new found friends and wooers who bluffed him that the Government would recognise his organisation if only he would rid it of the Communists. Eventually he demanded that the Communists should leave the I.C.U. or resign from the Party. *From this time dated the swift decline of the I.C.U. from a once great and promising workers' organisation into a shadow of its former self which soon departed from the stage of history.*

The Communist Party proceeded with the organisation of non-European workers. Party members organised many trade unions at this period, including the South African Clothing Workers' Union, the African Furniture Workers' Union, the African Laundry Workers' Union, the African Bakers Workers' Union, and the Non-European Railway and Harbour Workers' Union. The non-European Trade Union Federation was formed, with M. M. Kotane as Chairman and T. W. Thibedi as Secretary. The Federation claimed an affiliated membership of 10,000 in 1929.

At the same time, Party members continued to render outstanding services to the "established" trade union movement of predominantly White workers. "Bill" Andrews remained an outstanding figure in the movement, and when the Trade Union Congress (predecessor of the Trades and Labour Council) was established in 1925, his services were recognised by his election as its first secretary, a position he held for many years. The Trades and Labour Council never embarked on any vigorous campaigns to organise the masses of unorganised African workers, or welcomed

African trade unions warmly into its ranks and its leading committees. Nevertheless, it always had a non-colour bar constitution and demanded year after year that the infamous anti-African clauses be deleted from the Industrial Conciliation Act.

## NATIONAL LIBERATION

While the Party was actively recruiting Africans into its ranks and establishing branches throughout the country, it continued to maintain good fraternal relations with the African National Congress, and to encourage its members to play its part in the national movement. Many Party members (amongst whom may be cited J. La Guma, S. Silwana, J. Gomas, J. B. Marks, E. T. Mofutsunyana and M. M. Kotane) played an important part in the organisation of the A.N.C. They built new branches, resuscitated defunct ones and defended the organisation against its opponents and rivals.

On the Coloured national front the Party members assisted in the founding of the National Liberation League of South Africa, and the Non-European United Front and it was Party members, particularly Ray Alexander, who brought trade unionism to the masses of Coloured workers in the Cape. A similar story can be told about the Indian masses and the Indian people generally. Until the advent of the Communist Party, the masses of Indian workers were neglected and unorganised. Communists organised them into Trade Unions and Communists helped to change the political outlook of the national leadership of the Indian people in South Africa. It was the Communist leader, Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, together with his militant colleagues, who transformed the South African Indian Congress from a bourgeois dominated organisation seeking only sectional concessions for the Indian people, into a mass truly democratic organisation seeking the future of the community in a firm alliance with the oppressed African masses around a policy of equality for all. In the industrial field, the Indian workers of Natal still treasure the contributions of men like George Singh, George Ponen, and H. A. Naidoo.

Despite the great progress made after the 1924 conference, the Communist Party of S.A. had not at that time achieved the sufficient understanding of the nature of national oppression as the crucial factor in South Africa, of the dynamic, revolutionary and progressive potentialities of the national liberation movement of the oppressed people. The Party concerned itself mainly with economic issues, and the Africans interested it merely as exploited proletarians and toilers. It failed to absorb the Leninist approach to the National and Colonial question, or to apply it to the problems of this country.

Not the least of the services which Lenin and the Bolshevik Party rendered to the international labour movement was the profound understanding which they developed of the vast revolutionary potentialities of the anti-imperialist national liberation movements of hundreds of millions of oppressed colonial peoples in the East, in Africa and South America. Under the domination of the West European Social Democratic Parties, the pre-war Second International had paid but scant attention to this dynamic and world-changing phenomenon. They discussed the "national question" mainly as it affected a few European minorities, such as the Irish and the Poles under the old Tsarist empire, and all but ignored the vast problem of colonialism.

But the Bolshevik Party, working under the conditions of acute national oppression of the old Tsarist empire, which was "a prison of nations" uncompromisingly advanced the revolutionary slogan of the right of all nations to self-determination, including the right to secede and form separate national states.

> "To believe that men who belong to oppressor nations and do not uphold the right of oppressed nations to self-determination are capable of following a socialist policy, is ridiculous", wrote Lenin ("The National Liberation Movement in the East" p.93). And again :
> "Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation . . . but they must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising—and if need be, their revolutionary war—*against* the imperialist powers that oppress them."

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, precisely because of this revolutionary Marxist-Leninist understanding of the Bolsheviks, had the most far-reaching and dynamic effects upon the millions of oppressed people in the colonies and semi-colonies. It was the signal for the beginning of that vast movement of Asia, Africa and Latin America which continues to shake the world to this day, and which the genius of Lenin was so clearly to foresee. In his brilliant book "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of

Capitalism'" he established, on the basis of Marxist theory, the fundamental character of colonialism ; he denounced the first world war as a war "between the biggest slave-owners for preserving and fortifying slavery" and pointed out that

> "The labouring masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, comprising as they do the vast majority of the world's population . . . are definitely being converted into an active factor of world politics and of the revolutionary destruction of imperialism."

## "INDEPENDENT NATIVE REPUBLIC"

The impact of Lenin's ideas on the Communist Party of South Africa was, perhaps, slow in making itself effective. It should not be forgotten that at that time, few of the works of Lenin were available in translation. Nevertheless, more and more clearly the Party began to see that its role must be not merely that of a sympathiser, but of a vigorous participant in the fight for national liberation, for democracy and equality.

A turning point was the 6th World Congress of the Communist Interational held in 1928, at which the problems of South Africa came under specific discussion by the entire international Communist movement. Against the opposition of the South African delegation headed by Bunting, the Congress decided on the slogan for South Africa of "an Independent Native Republic—as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government."

Dispassionately viewing the International's formulation after two decades, it is not difficult to understand its unsuitability as a working slogan for this country. But its adoption brought a profoundly healthy transformation in the whole attitude and approach of the Party, cleansing it of remnants of white chauvinism, and dependence on overseas, particularly European, experience, compelling it to base its work upon a study of South African and African realities.

The Party focussed its attention on the burning problems, demands and aspirations of the African people as such, arising out of the specifically national oppression under which they suffer. One of the most important of such issues was, and still is, the *pass laws*. Under these vicious racial laws, designed to force African labour into the most unrewarding and hardest work, to deprive them of freedom of movement and impose a reign of terror upon them, millions are arrested year after year, and no laws are more bitterly hated by the masses of Africans. In a great anti-pass campaign of 1930, the Communist Party organised masses of Africans to burn their passes at mass meetings on December 16 (Dingaan's Day) 1930. At the Durban meeting, addressed by Johannes Nkosi, police opened fire and a number of comrades including Nkosi, lost their lives. At Potchefstroom fire was also opened by the police on the platform, headed by J. B. Marks and E. T. Mofutsanyana, who narrowly escaped with their lives.

As a result of this and similar campaigns, the Party's influence spread far and wide. Africans flocked into the Party. At the Party Conference in 1929 there were 20 African delegates and 10 European delegates representing 3,000 Party members. The Party newspaper "Umsebenzi", published articles in Zulu, Suthu, Xosa, Sechuana—the main African languages spoken by the population.

## FACTIONAL STRUGGLES

But bitter factional struggles spread within the ranks of the Party. An ultra-left sectarian group headed by Wolton and Bach came to dominate the leadership in 1930. Under the pretext of "bolshevising" the Party, and "purging it of right-wing elements" it embarked on a policy of wholesale expulsions in an utterly mechanical way. They expelled people without tangible reasons, and when members came to find out the reasons, they, too, were in turn expelled! No doubt, many who were expelled were indeed Right-wingers, whose subsequent careers have shown them to be opportunists who in any case would not have long stayed in a revolutionary Party. But the "expellers" summarily removed from Party membership, without levelling charges, or on the flimsiest pretext, all and sundry who disagreed with them, including such staunch foundation members of the Party as Bunting and Andrews. Moses Kotane, editor of "Umsébenzi", the Party organ, was removed from his post.

The Wolton-Bach leadership undoubtedly did great harm to the Party. Nevertheless some splendid political activities were conducted during this period by the Communist Party of South Africa. Joint African and White unemployed demonstrations were organised, and with banners and placards bearing appropriate slogans and demands, marched through the streets of Johnnesburg to the Pass Office, Carlton Hotel, Rand Club demanding "work or food". The Party conducted vigorous campaigns against the Greyshirt Movement and other fascist groups. A profound impression was made amongst wide masses of the people by the Party's campaign against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. But the Party was left in a state of organisational chaos. Still suffering from the effects of its sectarian policy, and failing fully to understand the Communist International's call for a united front, the Party took a lukewarm part in the national United Front campaign against the Hertzog Bills of 1935 and 1936. Internal squabbles continued. During the period 1936 to 1938 chaos, confusion and despondency reigned in its ranks. Deep factional cleavages, based largely on rival personalities, existed in Johannesburg, which had always been the area of the party's greatest strength. At an enlarged Central Committee meeting, requisitioned by the Cape Town and Durban District Committees, the leadership was transferred to Cape Town on the 1st January, 1939.

## REBUILDING AND RENASCENCE

In Cape Town, under the leadership of Comrade W. H. Andrews, as Chairman, and Moses M. Kotane as General Secretary, a fresh start was made to re-organise the Party to enable it and through it the workers and oppressed people of South Africa to play their full part in the struggle for political, economic and social emancipation.

With the assistance and encouragement of the Party, a progressive weekly newspaper, "The Guardian", was started in Cape Town and it continued for many years to inspire the struggles of the people of this country, for their liberation until it was banned by the Nationalist Government in 1952. Party offices were opened in the main centres of South Africa, and steady political, educational and organisational work resumed amongst the masses of the people.

In 1940 a new District Committee was elected in Johannesburg, which restored unity, dissolved all factions and succeeded in a short time in organising the membership soundly and instilling a spirit of enthusiasm and hard work. The newspaper "Inkululeko" was established to replace the now defunct "Umsebenzi". Many rousing campaigns were conducted around issues affecting the masses of the people, such as the pass laws, the acute housing shortage which found its expression in the shanty town movement, the low wages, and the general slogan of Votes for All. In conjunction with the Transvaal African National Congress, the Party began a vigorous drive to organise the African mineworkers of the

Witwatersrand, which resulted in the establishment and steady growth of the African Mineworkers' Union, under the Presidency of J. B. Marks.

## THE WAR PERIOD

The unprovoked attack by Hitlerite Germany on the Soviet Union, on June 22nd, 1941, transformed the international situation. The Party realised that the essential character of the war had changed, and that the defeat of Nazi Germany was in the vital interests of all humanity. It embarked upon a wholehearted campaign to mobilise the enthusiasm and manpower of the masses of the people behind the war effort which the Smuts Government was rather lukewarmly conducting against the Nazis. The Party launched a "Defend South Africa" campaign of 1942, in which leading Party members toured from one end of the country to the other, passionately demanding that African soldiers be armed, that pass laws and other forms of racial discrimination be abolished, that the masses of the people be given a genuine stake in the future of the country. This was a period of greatly increased activity, growth and popular support for the Party amongst all sections of the population. The heroic resistance of the Red Army at Stalingrad, Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere in the Soviet Union, won the warm admiration of the South African people, and swept away overnight the effects of twenty years or more of steady lying propaganda directed against Communism and the U.S.S.R. Tens of thousands of workers attended the public meetings regularly held by the branches of the Party, took part in food raids and other dynamic activities directed against black marketeering, in movements for higher wages initiated by the Party. The membership steadily increased. Even amongst the privileged White minority, democratic and radical ideas began to spread rapidly.

The Party fought uncompromisingly for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. In the Party constitution adopted in 1944, the demand for equality of rights of all adult men and women, irrespective of race or colour, to be elected to Parliament and all local governing bodies and to vote for these institutions was put forward as the immediate aim. The Party worked unceasingly to build a national democratic front of national liberation movements, such as the African National Congress, the S.A. Indian Congress, together with the militant anti-racialist trade unions and the Communist Party, to fight for equality of rights and opportunities for all. This policy found ready acceptance amongst the masses, particularly of the African people, amongst whom the Party enjoyed steadily increasing prestige and support. At that time, the African people of the country were still allowed some sort of representation in Parliament—although it was only 3 seats out of 150, and the candidate had to be White. When the Party nominated Sam Kahn for one of these seats (in the Cape Western Division) he was elected to Parliament with a handsome majority.

Under the leadership of Moses Kotane, himself a senior leader of the A.N.C., the Party enjoyed increasingly close and friendly fraternal relations with the African National Congress, with the non-European trade unions, the Indian Congress and other democratic organisations. When the war in Europe ended, in 1945, the Party, together with the African National Congress (Transvaal), the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions organised a demonstration of over 20,000 people, one of the biggest ever seen in the city. One of the chief slogans of the demonstration was that fascism, having been defeated in Europe, must now be defeated in South Africa. But this warning went unheeded by the white electorate and only three years later the Nationalist Party, headed by Malan, Strydom, Verwoerd and other admirers of Hitler, came to power in South Africa.

## ILLEGALITY

Though, from 1921 to 1948, the Communist Party of South Africa enjoyed formal legality, it was continuously subjected to various forms of repression by the Governments which ruled the country during this period. It had barely been formed, when the first General Secretary, W. H. Andrews, was imprisoned for his part in the 1922 strike, and as stated above, a number of comrades lost their lives in the armed suppression of that strike, and in the judicial murders which followed in the wave of reaction let loose by the Smuts Government after the strike. These repressions were to set the pattern for the Party's existence in the following years. Innumerable arrests were the lot of all Party leaders and organisers. Few leading comrades did not become familiar with the inside of South African prisons.

On December 16th, 1930, the great African martyr and hero, Comrade Johannes Nkosi, a member of the Communist Party, was first shot and wounded and then brutally thrashed to death by the police following a great pass burning demonstration led by the

Party in Durban. Others killed at that meeting were Ben Pani, James Mhlongo and Joseph Sofoli.

In August, 1946, there was a great strike of African mineworkers on the Witwatersrand. The workers, in South Africa's greatest industry, had made repeated efforts to obtain a hearing from the employers—the Chamber of Mines—to put forward their claim of a minimum wage of 10/- a day. But the employers ignored the African Mineworkers' Union, and the workers were left with no alternative but to withhold their labour. For over a week, something like 100,000 African mineworkers from East Rand to West Rand came out on strike in spite of the enormous difficulties of such an action by workers from many parts of the African continent, herded and imprisoned in compounds, and isolated from one another. This strike was the signal for a nationwide wave of repression by the Smuts Government. The strike was brutally repressed by armed force, and many workers were killed. Not only the offices of the African Mineworkers' Union and the other African Unions, but also the offices of the Communist Party in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London were raided by the police. Many thousands of documents were seized. The General Secretary of the Party, Moses Kotane, was arrested together with members of the Johannesburg District Committee of the Party and leaders of the African Mineworkers' Union. The Government then arrested all the members of the Central Executive Committee on charges of sedition, arising out of the same strike and raids. The trial dragged on for two years before it was abandoned by the Government.

In 1948, the White electorate gave a parliamentary majority to the Nationalist Party, led by the admirers of Hitler—the most reactionary elements in the country. This party had sworn to "destroy Communism in South Africa", and in 1950 the Nationalist Government introduced a Bill for the "supppression of Communism". This Bill declared the Communist Party of S.A. to be an illegal organisation, and laid down severe penalties for "advocating any of the objects of Communism" or for belonging to the Party after the Bill had passed through Parliament.

## DISSOLUTION OF THE C.P.S.A.

In discussing the reaction of the Central Committee to this vicious law, it should not be forgotten that, during the war years, the Party had enjoyed a brief period of "legality" without precedent in its history. In its understandable anxiety to establish its right, as a political party, to take part in all public activities the same as any other party, the C.P.S.A. had completely relaxed the precautions and vigilance which had been forced upon it in earlier periods. Practically every member was known to the public—and hence to the police—and a large number of new members had joined who were completely unequipped, mentally and practically, to face the rigours, dangers and hardships of underground work. An attitude had developed of relying exclusively on legally permitted methods of work, of fighting repression through Court proceedings, and of neglecting those essential measures to protect the personnel of the Party and ensuring its continued existence under any circumstances which should be taken by every revolutionary workers' organisation in capitalist conditions. Legalistic illusions had penetrated deep into the ranks of the Party, including its leading personnel, undermining revolutionary vigilance and determination.

The whole of democratic South Africa joined in a protest against the Suppression of Communism Bill. The African National Congress called an emergency meeting of the Executives of the S.A. Indian Congress, the African People's Organisation, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions and the Communist Party to consider measures against it, and as a result it was decided to call for a national general strike on June 26, 1950—the first of the famous Freedom Day actions on this date. The strike met with an enthusiastic response from tens of thousands of workers, but the Government nevertheless forced the law through Parliament.

A special meeting of the Central Committee of the Party was held in Cape Town in May, 1950 to consider what to do. Some comrades were in favour of defying the law and continuing underground, but the majority felt that the difficulties involved in continuing as an illegal Party, with all the membership known to and listed by the police, were too formidable. Accordingly, the Central Committee decided by a majority vote to dissolve the Party, and this decision was carried out on the third reading of the Bill, in June 1950. The dissolution should not be seen in isolation, but as the culmination of a series of legalistic errors. Despite its great achievements and innumerable heroic struggles, the Communist Party of South Africa had proved incapable of surviving under illegal conditions.

Nevertheless, the Party had thrust its roots deep into the life of the country. It had trained many capable and steeled Marxist-Leninists. It had won an enduring place in the affections of the working class of this country. It had set a standard of integrity, selflessness and devoted, energetic work for high and noble principles, which has never been surpassed. It played a tremendous part in clarifying the basic issues facing the country, exposing by its dynamic practical work the tame reformism which had dominated sections of the national movements, the conservatism and treachery to principle of the right-wing labour leaders, and the luke-warm "liberals" of the day. While we may learn from the shortcomings and errors of the pioneers of the Communist movement in South Africa, the people of this country will always honour their memory.

## A NEW BEGINNING

The Nationalist Government had boasted that, through the Suppression of Communism Act and other measures of persecution, in which hundreds of "listed" Communists were victimised, banned, banished and forced to resign from organisations which they had given their lives to build, they had "destroyed Communism in South Africa". It was an idle boast. Defying the evil Nazi laws of the Nationalists, the steeled and determined Communists of South Africa came together to form the South African Communist Party, to carry forward and raise still higher the banner of the Communist movement under the new and testing conditions of illegality. Combining legal mass work with the illegal work of building the Marxist-Leninist Party as the disciplined vanguard of the fight for freedom, democracy, peace and socialism, the South African Communist Party is the heir to the glorious tradition created by the Communist Party of South Africa. It is a tradition of unflinching struggle against oppression and exploitation, for unity of the workers and freedom-loving people of our country, irrespective of race and colour, in the common fight for a free, democratic South Africa.

The review concludes by declaring that the Fortieth Anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of South Africa is a date which will be hailed and commemorated by all South African Communists, and by all who are dedicated to the fight to rid our country of the evil system of apartheid, to carry out a democratic, people's South African revolution, as an integral part of the great African Revolution which is sweeping our continent.

## MASS LEAFLET

In addition to the review, "After Forty Years", the text of which is summarised above, the underground South African Communist Party marked the occasion by the distribution, in all main centres of the country, of tens of thousands of copies of a leaflet, which makes stirring reading.

"Never was any organisation so much hated by the bosses and rulers of this country as the Communist Party", it declares. "Never was any organisation so much loved by the workers of the towns and poor people of the countryside, by the oppressed millions of non-Whites. The reason was not far to seek. In every struggle of the people—against racial discrimination, poverty and oppression—the Communist Party fought in the front ranks."

After recalling some of the epic struggles of the C.P.S.A., the leaflet points out that the Communists stand for the direct opposite of everything the Nationalist (Government) Party stands for—"Instead of apartheid, unity and friendship of all South Africans, black and white; instead of oppression, freedom and equality." Listing the various repressive steps taken by the Government against Communists, the leaflet says: "By methods like these the Nats thought they could kill the spirit of Communism in South Africa. *But they have failed hopelessly.* The former Communist Party of South Africa was dissolved, but a new one—the South African Communist Party—has grown up in its place to carry the struggle on to victory."

## YOU CANNOT KILL IDEAS

"The Nationalist Party cannot destroy or suppress Communism," the leaflet boldly declares.

"They can persecute Communists—but they cannot kill the deep roots of Communism in the love and respect of the people. They cannot break the firm ties of comradeship between Communists and non-Communists in the freedom fight.

"You can kill people—but you cannot kill ideas, least of all, noble and true ideas like those of Communism. For these ideas have been evolved by the greatest thinkers humanity has produced. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin. They embody and carry forward the thinking of all the great humanists down the ages. They arise from a deep study of philosophy, of history, of the world we live in and the working of the capitalist system.

"History has proved Communism to be true and correct. In a short period of time, enormous strides forward to a better and freer life have been made under Communist leadership by formerly backward countries like Russia and China. Hitler's monstrous armies were crushed, primarily by the Soviet Union. And it is the socialist science of the Soviet Union which has led to the Conquest of Space by Man.

"Despite all the lies of the capitalist newspapers, these and many other facts prove to all that Communism holds the answers to the problems of humanity ; the key to a better and brighter future for all who live on this earth ; the key to peace, national freedom, democracy and socialism."

After explaining the Party's stand for Socialism, the leaflet states the Party's views on the present situation.

"On the immediate problem of South Africa we stand with all other patriots and democrats irrespective of their views about socialism. We stand for a United Front of National Liberation. We stand, together with the Congress Movement, for the Freedom Charter. We stand for the overthrow of the Nazi Nationalist Government and the summoning of a democratically elected sovereign National Convention to promulgate a new Constitution for a free South Africa.

"We stand for higher wages, for free speech and the ending of the Nazi laws which have driven the Communist Party and the African National Congress underground.

"The leaflet concludes with a stirring call to the people to organise in their trade unions and national organisations, and to support the Party. It strikes a note of unquenchable confidence :

"The African Revolution which is sweeping through our Continent has won one victory after another until independence has been won everywhere except in a few pockets of Imperialism such as the Portuguese Colonies and the vicious White Colonialism practised in this country and the Rhodesias. The people will win here too."

## FRATERNAL MESSAGES

Fraternal Communist Parties in various parts of the world sent greetings to the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party on this historic anniversary.

A message from the *Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* conveying "heartfelt greetings to the fraternal South African Communist Party", says :

> "Faithful to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, your party working under difficult underground conditions, is carrying on a tireless struggle for the fundamental interests of the working class and the working masses of South Africa for peace, democracy and socialism.

The *Communist Party of China* in its message, extends "warm and fraternal greetings to the Central Committee and all the members of the South African Communist Party." It declared that for the past 40 years, the Communists of South Africa have "led the South African people in waging a persistent and unremitting struggle against the enslavement and oppression of the African people by imperialism, against the reactionary rule of the colonialists of South Africa in pursuing the policy of racial-discrimination and racial segregation and in defence of the living interests of the African people and other working people in South Africa."

The message of greetings from Comrade Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the *Socialist Unity Party* in the German Democratic Republic says that "ever since its foundation", the Communist Party of South Africa has "represented the revolutionary unity of white and coloured workers".

And the Central Committee of the *Communist Party of Bulgaria,* in its message declares that "your Party persists in leading a valiant and inexorable struggle against oppression and exploitation, for the unity of the working people—black and white—in the common struggle for democracy, social progress, for peace and friendship among all peoples."

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## NATIONALISM OF OPPRESSED NATIONS

Marxist-Leninists draw a distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed nations and that of the oppressor nations. The nationalism of an oppressed nation contains a *general democratic element* directed against oppression, and Communists support it because they consider it historically justified at a given stage. That element finds expression in the striving of the oppressed peoples to free themselves from imperialist oppression, to gain national independence and bring about a national renaissance. But the nationalism of an oppressed nation has yet another aspect, one expressing the ideology and interests of the reactionary exploiting top stratum.

— From the draft *Programme of the C.P.S.U.*

# From East, West, North and South

## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

IT is tremendously stimulating and encouraging to us to read the letters that continue in ever-increasing numbers to reach us from all corners of our mighty continent — North, South, East and West. They show, as we have always believed, that "Africa needs Communist thought as dry and thirsty soil needs rain." The patriotic workers, peasants and intellectuals of Africa, desperately seeking a way forward to a better life, find in the ideas and outlook of Marxism-Leninism the key to unlock the mental prison in which, for too long, the colonialists and their agents have imprisoned the minds of Africa. Because they are true and convincing, because they are based on scientific principles and boundless faith in the abilities of the common people, because they illumine the path to the New Africa, Communist ideas have the power to break down the walls of prejudice, slander and fear which the imperialists have erected against them. In this process the *African Communist* is playing a proud and worthy part.

"How thankful I am to have known that there is such a splendid magazine, "The *African Communist*," writes F. H. S. Tlalê, from *Bechuanaland*. "As a true African nationalist, my greatest enemies are capitalism, colonialism and imperialism ; all these systems are not without illiteracy and the killing of legitimate leaders — heroes of Africa. I have given the widest, intelligent publicity to the magazine."

**"THE IDEAL MAGAZINE"**

And from *South Africa* a reader writes : "Once more the articles are thought-provoking, interesting and certainly very encouraging . . . . Your magazine is eagerly awaited, read and circulated. This is the ideal magazine for all who love and live for Mother Africa."

Moving Northwards, to *Northern Rhodesia*, a correspondent states : "I am personally against the capitalist mode of production which is responsible for poverty and degradation in my society today."

Westwards, now, to *Ghana* : "It is a real pleasure to receive your journal, which I consider will play an important part in helping us to victory in the struggle for the liberation of our Continent and mankind . . . . I would like to suggest that articles dealing with the peace movement and the struggle for peace be published. (We accept this suggestion—Editor.) Keep up the good work."

Still in the West, comes a letter from *Mali* — from Ly Tidiane Baidy, representative of the Party of African Independence, giving us the welcome news that Majmoud Diop, first secretary of his Party, together with Wade Madicke, secretary of the Saint-Louis section, have been released after long months of imprisonment by the reactionary government of Senegal — these releases followed a vigorous world-wide campaign. Comrade Baidy adds: "I find the journal very interesting and ideologically important and instructive for African Marxists and all who are fighting against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa. Be so good as to send me fifty copies at least . . . . Our Party is a Marxist-Leninist one fighting for independence and socialism (not 'African socialism' like Senghor's, which means nothing.)"

### "FRESH DISCOVERIES"

An African in the heart of the countryside writes: "The *African Communist* of the July issue has opened fresh discoveries in the minds of freedom fighters who have been misled by capitalists. It is now that Communism has been introduced in the correct way to us."

Most of our letters come from Africa. But here is one from *Europe* which we found particularly moving. It comes from Jackson S. Kessi, an African student abroad.

"I wish to write and congratulate you most heartily and sincerely for this unprecedented courage and initiative you have shown," he writes. "It is not long since I came to this country, nor is it long since I started to know the truth about Socialism and Communism. Even now I know so little about this inevitable ideology of human society: the ideology which the oppressed, poor African masses need as much as dry soil needs water.

### "A GREAT LIGHT AND ENCOURAGEMENT"

" The *African Communist* brought to my friends and myself a great light and encouragement which we had so longed for. It has not only enabled us to form a Marxist study group, but it has brought us much closer and far more patriotic towards our motherland, Africa. In our group which we have formed according to your advice, we have members from all corners of Africa.

It is so far quite a small group, but worth it. We are now studying systematically various works of Marx and Lenin, the new book Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism’ and the ‘History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’.

“Dear Comrades. We have young men (we are all students) who are very devoted to this course of Marxism and Leninism, and are prepared to go back home and spread it to our thirsty brethren. Brothers, we need your help, we do not want to fail! Your encouragement is very necessary to us.”

Coming back to Africa again, this time far in the East, on the island of *Zanzibar*, we were happy to hear from Abdulaziz A. K. Twala, who is editor of the Swahili paper “Mkombozi” (The Liberator) as well as a leading trade unionist. He writes:

“The greatest need of the day is to get as much of progressive literature as possible, journals and all that helps develop revolutionary thinking, distributed and read by the greater number of the masses. It is the masses, the peasantry and the working class, which is the backbone of all revolutions, economic and political. The revolutionary forces of Africa need progressive literature to help them in achieving their goal. We are of the opinion that the *African Communist* can play a very important if not a leading role in giving a true picture of Communism and its superior economic system — socialism. I will see to it that the journal is read by as many people as possible. The journal has already got itself a name, and it is one of the popular journals read by most of the trade unionists.”

Letters like all these we have quoted are a source of wonderful encouragement and strength to all of us who work to produce this magazine. It is not easy in the conditions of police terror and illegality we suffer in Verwoerd’s Republic to produce the *African Communist*. Like all underground work, it is difficult and dangerous. But when we receive letters like these it makes us more determined than ever to redouble our efforts to build up the circulation of our magazine and improve its contents; to make it a more effective weapon for the liberation and enlightenment of Africa.

## SPECIAL BRANCH METHODS

We receive letters of another kind as well, mainly from the Republic of South Africa. These letters show the continual repression and intimidation that goes on in this police state. Here, our magazine is banned, and one report after another reaches us of readers who have been visited by members of the “speci branch” of the police — Verwoerd’s Gestapo — and “instructe to write to our London agent to stop sending copies. Of cour this procedure is quite illegal, and readers who are aware of t law know that *no policeman can instruct a member of the publ to write any such letter.* We send The *African Communist* to thos who may be interested without their asking us to do so ; therefore people who merely receive it are not committing any offen or breaking any law. The police know this, and their deman are mere bluff. But the whole business shows up the speci branch in a very poor light. First, it proves that they snoop int and open people’s private letters without their permission. Second it shows how they do not scruple to try to bluff and blackmail simp people who they think are ignorant of their rights under the la In spite of this, the *African Communist* is becoming more and mo popular and treasured among the brave fighters against aparthe and for a free South Africa.

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## WHAT IS COMMUNISM?

The building of a Communist society has become an immediate practical task for the Soviet people. The gradual development of Socialism into Communism is an objective law ; it ha been prepared by the development of Soviet Socialist socie throughout the preceding period.

What is Communism?

Communism is a classless social system with one form o public ownership of the means of production and full soci equality of all members of society. Under it, the all-round development of people will be accompanied by the growth of the productive forces through continuous progress in science an technology. All sources of public wealth will gush forth abundantly, and the great principle “From each according to his ability to each according to his needs,” will be implemented.

Communism is a highly organised society of free, socially conscious working people in which public self-government shall b established, a society in which labour for the good of society wi become the prime vital requirement of everyone, a necessit recognised by one and all ; and the ability of each person will b employed to the greatest benefit of society.

— From the draft *Programme of the Communis Party of the Soviet Union.*

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